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LIBRARY ESSAYS

LIBRARY ESSAYS

ABOUT BOOKS, BIBLIOPHILES, WRITERS AND KINDRED SUBJECTS

BY

HENRY HOWARD HARPER

TO READ BOOKS IS SOMETIMES LESS DIVERTING
THAN TO READ ABOUT THEM

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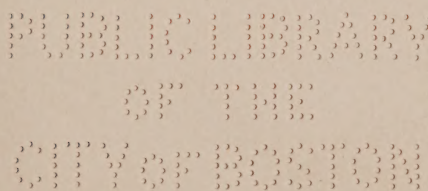

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Henry Howard Harper
Nov. 26. 1924

THE TORCH PRESS
CEDAR RAPIDS
IOWA

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY

OF MY LATE FRIEND

FRANCIS STUYVESANT PEABODY

IN DEFERENCE TO WHOSE EXPRESSED WISH
I HAVE GROUPED THESE ARTICLES
TOGETHER IN ONE VOLUME

THE AUTHOR

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FOREWORD

The eight chapters, or articles, in this volume are called Library Essays, for want of a better title. In consulting a dictionary of synonyms for some name synonomous with Essay, but less conceited and more euphonious, I found that "Essay" is described as an "Attempt, Trial, Endeavor, Effort, Struggle;" therefore I promptly adopted it as a title for these papers, all of which I wrote for The Bibliophile Society — mostly for the Year Books issued prior to 1913. The one relating to Henry D. Thoreau and the discovery of the original manuscript of *Walden* is mostly taken from the Prefatory Note I wrote for the new and unabridged edition of that classic issued by The Bibliophile Society in 1908; and the article on Mary Shelley is from my introduction to a group of her Letters brought out by the same Society in 1918. The other six were printed in the Sixth, Seventh, Ninth, Eleventh and Twelfth Year Books. Most of them have been considerably altered, and their chronological arrangement changed. Therefore in their revised form they will be partly new to those who have already seen them.

H. H. H.

POETS — PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

PATRONS OF ART AND LITERATURE

POETS — PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

PATRONS OF ART AND LITERATURE

The Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. — WORDSWORTH.

IT IS noteworthy that much of the world's history has come down to us through the medium of epic poetry, and perhaps the reason why a large part of ancient history is devoted to wars and war heroes is that in those days many of the Emperors and military commanders made it a point to be on good terms with one or more bards in order to insure the praise and commemoration of their deeds. The Greek warrior Themistocles, — reputed to have been the greatest man that Athens ever produced, — when asked what sound or whose voice most pleased him, replied, — "The voice of him by whom my own exploits are best celebrated."

Augustus Cæsar encouraged the friendly regard of Horace and Vergil, who in turn did much toward the well-deserved immortalization of his name. On one occasion the great Augustus wrote to Horace,—"Look you, I take it much amiss that none of your writings of this class are addressed to me. Are you afraid it will damage your reputation with posterity to be thought to have been one of my intimates?" To which Horace modestly replied: —

> Since you, great Caesar, singly wield the charge
> Of Rome's concerns so manifold and large, —
> With sword and shield the commonwealth protect,
> With morals grace it and with laws correct, —
> The bard, methinks would do a public wrong,
> Who having gained your ear, should keep it long.

One of Horace's favorite themes is to be found in the following lines of the Greek poet Pindar, for whom he professed staunch allegiance: "As trees insensibly swell their germs when they are watered by the dew of Heaven, in like manner Virtue grows and gathers strength when cherished by the praise of worthy men." It is due to Horace that the name of Mæcenas, his patron saint, has been handed down to posterity as the symbol of generosity, the ideal statesman, the personifica-

tion of true manliness, and the illustrious genius of literary patronage. A more recent poet said of him,—

> Bright in the lyric bard's immortal page,
> Mæcenas shines through every distant age;
> The patron's fame has with the poet's grown.
> Oh could my muse insure her short-lived song,
> Like Horace sprightly, and like Vergil strong,
> To Time's last stage my envied name should shine,
> And bloom immortal by recording thine.

The younger Pliny, who represented the aristocracy of wealth, statesmanship and learning in the reign of Trajan, was never too busy or too haughty to write letters of compliment and encouragement to aspiring bards. His letters are incomparable models of Latin prose. Embodied genius is not altogether unprejudiced in bestowing its decorations, and it is not to be wondered at that it is sometimes disposed to favor those who foster it, whether deserving or not. To cite but a single instance of partiality and faulty discernment, if the history of the scalawag Regulus consisted of nothing more than the fulsome praise bestowed upon him in the verses of the obsequious Martial he would be accounted one of the great, noble-minded men of the first century.

Possibly the fact that the poetry of modern times is less commemorative of individuals than the works of the poets of antiquity is to be accounted for by the scanty homage paid to poets by heroes, statesmen and politicians, who doubtless feel that their performances receive all the recognition they deserve through the columns of the daily press.

If some modern poets have been inclined to copy the metrical arrangement of the Roman poets in or about the first century A.D., it is observable that those old masters of metre also paid the same compliment to their Greek predecessors, without any thought of plagiarism. Horace repeatedly acknowledged his obeisance to Pindar, from whom he did not hesitate to take whole lines and adapt them to his own time and conditions. Yet the poems of Horace will forever be world-famed for their "original strength and beauty." The learned Sanadon has well said of them,—"We may now be bold to say that their destiny is blended with that of the world, and that they can only perish in one common ruin." Perhaps the world will never produce a poet who will get nearer the human heart of all times, or the lustre of whose name will outlast that of Horace.

Others may possibly outshine it, but none will outlive it. Empires have risen and fallen to decay, and countless monuments have crumbled to ruins, but the name of Horace lives on. The secret of his longevity lies not so much in the brilliance and originality of his genius as in the combined simplicity, faultless delineation and human qualities of his poems. For these and other attributes they will always be recognized as paragons of historical verse. The grandeur of Rome, her customs and her people of high and low degree are all recorded in his lines, and for hundreds of years his works have been the manual of leading statesmen, orators and poets, who have quoted, imitated and copied him. The Bibliophile Society's edition of Horace's Odes and Epodes, issued in 1902, contains translations by upwards of one hundred and fifty renowned scholars, including Ben Jonson, Milton, Pope, Addison, Swift and Gladstone. And a volume of Horatian Quotations, issued later, contains a thousand selected maxims and epigrammatic phrases from his works.

The poetic calendar contains many names, once more or less illustrious, but now forgotten, for two principal reasons: first, because they had not sufficient poetic depth and creative

genius to vitalize their thoughts, and secondly, because their works were neither local nor contemporary in character; hence they neither immortalized themselves nor anything else in the age wherein they lived. A poet who is foreign in thought might as well be foreign in birth and residence so far as regards any permanent benefit the literature or history of his country derives from his genius. Of course it is not essential or desirable that all poets be of the epic kind, any more than that all prose writers should be historians; but to those familiar with ancient history it is an obvious fact that a nation's greatness in the eyes of posterity is measured by the power of its poetry. The literature of modern ages is filled with references to and quotations from the lyrical history of Rome and classic little Athens, and the names of their poets, the splendor of their palaces, the erudition of their scholars and the mighty deeds of their heroes will forever be fresh in the memory of all civilized nations; while the history of the preceding centuries and the succeeding Dark Ages, having no poets, is practically buried in obscurity.

In the Ninth Ode of his Fourth Book, Horace wrote,—

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
multi; sed omnes inlacrimabiles
urgentur ignotique longa
nocte, carent quia vate sacro. —

Which was translated and amplified by Sir Stephen E. De Vere in the following lines:—

A race of heroes brave and strong,
Before Atrides, fought and died;
No Homer lived; no sacred song
Their great deeds sanctified;
Obscure, unwept, unknown they lie,
Opprest with clouds of endless night:
No poet lived to glorify
Their names with light.

The large aggregation of ancient poets and prose historians have supplied us with a more perspicuous picture of Rome at the commencement of the first century than we have of New York or Boston at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We are making history rapidly, with but few who have time or inclination to record it, either with the brush or the pen. Even sketchy and loosely written histories of small American towns and pioneer settlements bring tremendous prices in the auction room — because of their exceeding rarity.

In 1855, Lowell said: — "John Quincy

Adams, making a speech at New Bedford many years ago, reckoned the number of whale ships (if I remember rightly) that sailed out of that port, and comparing it with some former period, took it as a type of American success. But alas! it is with quite other oil that those far-shining lamps of a nation's true glory, which burn forever, must be filled. It is not by any amount of material splendor or prosperity, but only by moral greatness, by ideas, by works of the imagination, that a race can conquer the future. No voice comes to us from the once mighty Assyria but the hoot of the owl that nests amid her crumbling palaces; of Carthage, whose merchant fleets once furled their sails in every port of the known world, nothing is left but the deeds of Hannibal. She lies dead on the shore of her once subject sea, and the wind of the desert flings its handfuls of burial sand upon her corpse."

Doubtless the world has now in a state of enduring preservation as good poetry as will ever be produced; and it has been argued that there is enough of such to supply our needs for hundreds of years to come; and that in assimilating new verse we shall crowd out the old. Absurd as this contention must appear, it is not

surprising that some are inclined to such a view, when we consider the derelict tendencies of most modern poets. Instead of thinking in the present, and of material things, they appear to feel that more profundity and learning are displayed in the treatment of occult mental phenomena and unfamiliar subjects in an abysmal or recondite manner. Our poets are not of the heroic or narrative type. They are frequently addicted to introspection, rather than introjection; and they often plume themselves on their spiritual aloofness from the world, perhaps because worldly objects and thoughts are transitory, while spiritual things are eternal—as they hope their poetry will be. Hence they converse and write more about psychic philosophies and supernormal fancies originating within themselves than of conditions and facts derived from contact with the world about them. The poet Donne thus characterized one of his own cult:—

> . . . he who loveliness within
> Hath found, all outward loathes.

I have often attended meetings and so-called practical "Shop Talks" at the Authors' Club where I felt so mortal and earthly, and so far beneath the lofty trend of ethereal thought,

that I could no more get aboard their train of meditation than I could have boarded an aeroplane flying a mile high. The modern poetical mind seems not to be habitually engrossed with epochal considerations, such as perpetuating the memory of customs, events, civic affairs, national spirit, and native achievements, as did Homer, Pindar, Horace, Dante, and others of the world's great bards, whose writings are indubitable similitudes of their own times, chronicled in their own accustomed language. The poet who plays upon fleeting fancies of the imagination occupies a place analogous to that of the man who chases butterflies with a net; while the writer who sharply defines his word-pictures against a background of human nature thus attunes his works to all generations of mankind and to all individuals who share the common impulses of humanity. He animates his imagery with living characters and concurrent events which present a true perspective of the age in which he lives. Such narrative contemporaneous records might seem trite and uninteresting to readers at the time, because they treat of nothing new or strange, and are therefore devoid of singularity for those to

whom they are already familiar. But the readers and students of the future will scrutinize the literature of our age to find the poet in whose works is depicted an unaffected account of his own time,— the heroic deeds, habits, local colorings, idioms and inventions, just as we in our turn read the poets and historians of the past rather than of the present.[1] Poets who

[1] Since this was written the greatest war in all history has come and gone, with but little either in prose or in verse to commemorate the event, aside from a few novels, personal reminiscences and government records. In their eagerness to forget the great cataclysm, people of this generation naturally shrink from anything that revives the memory of its horrors; but a dozen volumes could be written on the subject that would interest future generations. The promptness with which the people of all civilized nations responded to the cry of outraged humanity, the celerity with which their machine shops and factories were converted into ammunition plants and arsenals, the swiftness with which peaceful industrial nations were transformed into great and efficient war machines, the willingness with which millions of men left their homes and their country to go to the front and grapple with death and devastation, not to mention the thousands of individual acts of heroism, altruism and patriotism, all deserve to be commemorated for the benefit of generations to come. The last war produced more valor, more national spirit, more self-sacrifice, more scientific ingenuity, more bitterness, more world-wide suffering, more bloodshed, more expenditure of money, and withal more beneficent results than all the battles and military operations chronicled by all the poets and historians of ancient Greece and Rome combined; and yet we pass it over with less literary notice than a mere skirmish would have elicited from the pen of Homer.— H. H. H.

sing of flowers and frog-ponds, forests, hills and rippling streams, sheep-pastures and other pastoral scenes, produce little or nothing that is peculiar to their own age, or instructive to future ages. Streams ripple now pretty much the same as they have for two thousand years or more; the flowers go on blooming in the customary way, the hills tower above the valleys as they always did, and the sheep will doubtless go in flocks and eat grass for thousands of years to come, as they have in the past. In the general treatment of such subjects poets must rise far above the normal genius of Man in order to enkindle their musings with a long-enduring flame. Among the ancients Theocritus and Vergil furnished conspicuous examples of such uncommon genius, while Spenser in his *Shepard's Calendar* rose to pastoral heights probably not elsewhere approached in the English language.

And perhaps one reason why so many popular prose writers are neglected and forgotten by posterity is that they devote their energies almost wholly to affairs of the heart rather than of the head — sentimental themes, vaporous conceits, and passions such as are common to all peoples and all ages, and of which every age

furnishes its own ample supply, both recorded and unrecorded. Their writings, although dealing with principles and usages common to all, are chiefly products of a limited imagination, true enough to nature perhaps, but hastily conceived and lacking the vital spark of genius; also lacking in originality or any substance that would give expression or life to genius, had it been applied. It must be a very exceptional romance by a very exceptional writer that survives its own generation. We may admire a living author for his great personal charm, for the beauty and concordance of his thoughts, or the sprightliness of his style; but after he is gone posterity has but little concern for his personality or his popularity, if in his writings he has gathered and preserved none of the fruits peculiar to his own time. Even the worst of the erotic literature of certain ages is tolerated and charitably clothed with a classic garb, if it reflects the spirit of the age in which it was written. It affords valuable information to the student in making a study of the people and the relative literature of all ages.

As to the poets of the future, it would of course be idle to make any predictions. In

ancient days their utterances were heralded far and wide, but in more modern times they are a sort of invisible and neglected creatures who usually make their appearance and depart before the busy world is fully aware of their presence. Who, therefore, knows but that a bevy of them are even now lurking somewhere in our midst, starving in attic rooms, and venturing out into society only so often as they feel the need of relaxation from brain fatigue?

Before the days of printing, when authors' manuscripts had to be copied by scribes, only works of unquestioned merit were given anything like wide circulation, and these were read and reiterated to the masses by the literate class. In those times a poet who gained the ear of a wide circle of listeners was recognized as a man of parts. He lived on terms of easy familiarity with the great, and was accorded a considerable measure of temporal glory, though he received little or no income from his labors except from special patrons, to whom he paid more or less court in his works. But now in the age of business thrift, amid the plethora of magazine and newspaper literature and dozens of "best seller" novels, the voice of the poet is little heard, and less heeded. People do not

nowadays relish new, unripened poetry, any more than they relish green apples. Indeed the former frequently engenders somewhat the same effect on the brain that the latter do on the stomach. In other words it would be about as infeasible for the reader to undertake to digest the unwinnowed contemporary poetry as it would be for a miller to buy unthrashed wheat for his mill. Naturally, therefore, most of those who care for poetry at all prefer to read only such works as have become ripened with age and set apart from the great bulk of poetical chaff. The inevitable conclusion is that there is but little profit or secular glory in the occupation of the true poet, for his recompense must be of a subsequent kind. It seldom happens that a man lives to recline in the shade of full-grown trees of his own planting. Likewise the poet who creates a monumental work is building for the delectation and enlightenment of unborn generations. The masterly works of Sir Philip Sidney, one of the poetical marvels of the Elizabethan age, were not even published until after his death.

The inexperienced player at auction bridge will often make an incorrect and misleading

bid, as if he were talking solely to himself; whereas he is in reality speaking to his partner, whom he deceives by a false declaration. And so it is with the poet; his song is not unto himself, but to future generations; and if his note be false the readers shun his works, as good bridge players shun a novice. Poets, like the prophets of old, must be content during their lifetime to be scoffed at by critics, to have busy people call them dreamers, and to wait some years after they die before receiving their just recognition. No wonder, then, that they follow the example of other literary geniuses and take to the field of evanescent literature, preferring to enjoy a moderate degree of physical remuneration instead of the empty prospect of a larger measure of posterior praise.

It is a singular fact that poets have usually made their appearance in swarms; and the Augustan period seems to have been the most productive of any in ancient history. About the middle of the century preceding the birth of Christ we find Lucretius, Catullus, and Varro, with many others of lesser calibre, followed by Horace, Vergil, Propertius, Ovid, and Tibullus — the last five representing the most conspicuous stars in the poetic constellation of

the Augustan age. These were soon followed, in the Silver age, by the outstanding creative genius of Lucan, Seneca and Juvenal, along with Martial, Statius and a dozen or more other contenders for poetic fame. And later it was left to Claudian to kindle the last spark of lustre in the literature of decadent Rome.

Passing over such widely scattered luminaries as Dante (1265-1321), Chaucer (c. 1340-1400), Spenser (c. 1552-1599), Shakespeare (1564-1616), Milton (1608-1674), Dryden (1631-1700), Pope (1688-1744), Goldsmith (1728-1774), and Burns (1759-1796), we find Shelley, Keats, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Thomas Moore, Lamb, Landor, Hood, Hunt, Southey and others, all grouped together in England in the early part of the nineteenth century, with Tennyson and the Brownings in embryo; while a few years later the Muses invaded America, and we had Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Poe, and Lowell forming a brilliant assemblage upon which American literature became firmly established. Those were indeed prolific eras and it would not be surprising if many generations pass before we experience another such tidal wave of poetic genius, either at home or abroad.

The word "patron" here has a different significance from that of ancient times, when every writer — if he was so fortunate — had his own special patron who sponsored and encouraged his genius by furnishing a part or all of his mundane needs. If there are any modern Mæcenases, neither they nor their protégés are much exposed to the limelight. But perhaps it is better so. Poetic genius seems to thrive on adversity, seeing that a large part of the best extant poetry was written under great mental or financial stress — usually both. It is an obvious fact that in these times among the most liberal and appreciative patrons of Literature and the Fine Arts — in other words, collectors of books and pictures — are men occupying positions of high responsibility in commercial, professional and political pursuits. Such men are usually active, wide-awake thinkers, and are all to a greater or less degree students of human nature. Their commanding positions nearly all require a mastery of the broad principles of commerce and of most human necessities; and it has been found that these accomplishments may be best acquired by

studying alternate conditions and by communion with master minds in daily life and in books.

It is not necessary that the books one reads should be exclusively of a technical nature, confined to the narrow limits of one's individual occupation. In the education of youth, the schools do not lay out the primary courses of instruction strictly along the lines required in any particular vocation to which the boy or girl may intend to apply his or her energy later in life; but the object is to train the mind to extend its reasoning powers into various fields, — mathematics, history, geography, science, philosophy, astronomy, art, etc. The faculties are thus interchangeably trained to apply themselves to any particular vocation. Cicero wrote to Gratius, — "Do you think it possible that we could find a supply for our daily speeches, when discussing such a variety of matters, unless we were to cultivate our minds by the study of literature? Or that our minds could bear being kept so constantly on the stretch if we did not relax them by that same study? . . . Literature is the food of youth, the delight of old age; the ornament of prosperity, the refuge and comfort of adversity; a delight at home,

and no hindrance abroad; companionable by night, and in travel, and in the country."

The law student who is compelled to read endless pages of Blackstone's Commentaries will often marvel at the seemingly stupid necessity of familiarizing himself with codes of obsolete laws and legal formulas, but later he comes to realize that he was laying a solid foundation for the development of his reasoning in principles of modern jurisprudence. And so, too, with the banker, railway magnate, manufacturer, physician, or master of any business occupation or profession; he has constant need of gathering knowledge and experience from sources other than the one in which he is immediately concerned. The salaried clerk — if he be content to eke out a meagre existence in some menial capacity of servitude — need not trouble himself to press his energies beyond the narrow confines of his habitual routine procedure; but the man of culture, ambition, and high responsibilities will be found constantly enriching his mind from varied sources, including books, which are the great storehouse of knowledge and recreation.

It does not, however, follow that every successful man of affairs is either a student or a

patron of literature or art; for some men are born to succeed even under the severest handicaps. But it is nevertheless a fact that the possessor of a nature imbued with these important branches of learning and diversion will realize a higher degree of enjoyment, and perhaps a larger measure of success, with less effort, than one who is entirely out of harmony with them. Charles Eliot Norton said: "It is by means of poetry that the imagination is quickened, nurtured and invigorated, and it is only through the exercise of his imagination that man can live a life that is in a true sense worth living. For it is the imagination which lifts him from the petty, transient and physical interests that engross the greater part of his time and thoughts in self-regarding pursuits, to the large, permanent and spiritual interests that ennoble his nature and transform him from a solitary individual into a member of the brotherhood of the human race."

It is to be remembered, also, that a great many women are now found among the most ardent and sagacious collectors of paintings and fine books. Indeed there are many men who although not possessing the instinct of the collector in these pursuits, encourage it in their

wives. Per contra there are enthusiastic women bibliophiles who receive no encouragement or coöperation in such inclinations from their husbands, and the outlay is frequently paid from their own private purse.

The men of means and large responsibilities in active life may be divided into three classes, in considering their attitude toward literature and art,— and since these are the two subjects with which we are at the moment most immediately concerned we may limit our observations to this field. Of these men there is a class who take a keen personal interest in every book and picture they acquire. They delight in the harmony of color and the realistic qualities of a picture by a skilled painter, or in a fine book in which the combined skill of a number of artisans,— author, illustrator, engraver, printer and binder are all brought into harmonious blending; and they find a pleasant diversion in personally selecting and with others enjoying these objects which add so greatly to the culture and enjoyment of the home.

There is another class who, although they enjoy these refining influences in the home surroundings, do not feel that they possess either the time or aptitude for selecting such adorn-

ments; and so the home, while it may be expensively furnished, is almost barren of art and literature; or perhaps the matter of selection is left to another — a secretary or librarian. They are extremely busy men; but they subscribe to many worthy public charities, pay annual dues in half a dozen exclusive clubs, buy a few fine books, paintings, etc.,— by proxy. All of these demands they will meet with toleration — possibly because such expenses seem naturally to fall to the lot of every man of means and distinction — so long as no time or thought is required that would for a moment take their attention from business affairs.

There is another and third class of men who are so distractingly busy that they have no time to buy books, no time to read books, no time to look at pictures, no time, in short, to do anything but work; and they live in boundless ignorance of the higher duties and pleasures of life which every man owes to himself and to those about him. Men of such exacting employment live a shallow existence and derive but little enjoyment from life, either for themselves or others, as compared with those of greater versatility and with temperaments endued with a love of literature and the fine arts.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

MARY SHELLEY first became widely known when as a girl of sixteen she ran away, in the early morning of July 28, 1814, with Percy Shelley, the poet, who was then unhappily married to Harriet Westbrook; but at that time, aside from being the grandson of an English baronet, he had achieved comparatively little that gave promise of undying fame. Four months earlier he had written to a friend,—"I have sunk into a premature old age of exhaustion which renders me dead to everything but the unenviable capacity of indulging the vanity of hope, and a terrible susceptibility to objects of disgust and hatred. . . . I live here like the insect that sports in a transient sunbeam, which the next cloud shall obscure forever." That one "hope" proved to be Mary, who apparently revived his spirits, for in the inspiring companionship of this talented girl he produced most of the work by which he so

greatly enriched the world's literature. Considering the fact that Mary had been obliged to live under the same roof with her father, the nagging, parasitical William Godwin, and a stepmother who was not famed for her tenderheartedness, it is not surprising that she should have run away with somebody, or anybody.

In this exploit she was accompanied by the daughter of her stepmother, a beautiful young lady named Jane (afterwards known as Clare) Clairmont, who abandoned the same uncongenial home to go with Mary and Shelley. Shortly after this adventure William Godwin wrote to one of his creditors, John Taylor, as follows:[1] "In the night of the 27th Mary and her sister Jane escaped from my house, and the next morning when I rose I found a letter on my dressing table informing me what they had done. . . . Jane we were, and still are, most anxious to recover immediately; and therefore after much deliberation it was agreed that Mrs. Godwin should set off after them by the evening's mail. She overtook them at Calais. I had made it a condition in suffering

[1] This letter appears to have escaped all the biographers. It is in the possession of Mr. William K. Bixby, and was printed, for the first time so far as known, in the Tenth Year Book of The Bibliophile Society.

her to depart, that she should avoid seeing Shelley, who had conceived a particular aversion to her as a dangerous foe to his views, and might be capable of any act of desperation. Mrs. Godwin wrote to Jane the very moment she reached Calais, July 29, who came to her at a separate inn, spent the night with her, and promised to return with her to England the next morning. But when morning arrived she said she must see the fugitives for a few minutes, and in that interview all her resolutions were subverted. Not the most earnest entreaties of a mother could turn her from her purpose; and on Sunday, July 31, Mrs. Godwin returned once more alone."

Of this episode Mr. H. Buxton Forman says that "the meeting of these two revolutionized Shelley's very soul, so to speak, and by the agency of a grand passion such as he never for a moment had for Harriet, transformed the accomplished and rhetorical author of *Queen Mab* into the authentic and indubitable poet of *Alastor*."

The world's debt of gratitude to Mary Shelley can hardly be overestimated, for her influence upon the life and the work of Shelley was very marked throughout their entire eight

years of mutual devotion,— the years of his productivity. She did not fall into the error, too common among young women, of assuming that she had "landed a man," and that she could hold him by her physical attractions alone. Instead, she applied herself at once to the task of improving her mind along lines congenial to him, as shown by her journal list of books she read the first year, consisting of about ninety volumes of well known Greek, Latin, and English classics, including Homer, Chaucer, Dante, Spenser, Ovid, Milton, Vergil, Rousseau, the New Testament, and many others.

For a girl of sixteen to read and intelligently study such a prodigious mass of learning in the space of twelve months shows a degree of application and mental precocity almost beyond human comprehension. This was followed the next year or two by the reading of more than a hundred other volumes of classic literature. Her ambition to keep pace with the mental development of the erudite Shelley never flagged for a moment, and in whatever field his quest of knowledge and inspiration carried him he found her, not at his heels, but by his side. To this end she delved into the study of various

languages, and in an incredibly short time she acquired a considerable knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Italian. Painting, drawing, sculpture, and music also came within the scope of her studies; indeed anything and everything that served to bring her into closer mental touch with her Shelley—"My Shelley," she always called him. From Rome she wrote to a friend: "We pass our days viewing the divinest statues in the world. . . . Besides our eternal visits to these divine objects, Clare is learning to sing, I painting, and S. is writing a poem,[1] so that the *belle arte* take up all our time." Together they wandered here and there through art galleries and amid inspiring historic scenes; they visited the Pantheon by moonlight and "saw the lovely sight of the moon appearing through the round aperture above, and lighting the columns of the Rotunda with its rays. . . . We live surrounded by antiquity ruined and perfect, besides seeing the lovely pictures of your favorite Raphael." They ascended Vesuvius, made excursions to Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum, and other historic places.

[1] The "poem" was doubtless *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley's masterpiece, most of which was written amid the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla.

If Mary Shelley had no other claim to immortality than that of having been the constant helpmate of the poet while he wrote *The Cenci* — suggested by her — *Alastor*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, that alone would be sufficient;[1] but her helpfulness to him is by no means her only claim to recognition. From her talented mother — who died in giving her birth — she inherited her sweet, persuasive nature, and the literary instincts that produced *Frankenstein, Valperga, Ladore*, and other works.

All of Mrs. Shelley's correspondence shows her to have been a keen observer, of unusual perceptive faculties, a critic of art, literature, the drama, and especially the opera. Combining these qualities with a sympathetic, gentle, lovable nature which accorded perfectly with Shelley's ideals, it is reasonable to suppose that from such a companionship he derived much

[1] In dedicating one of his greatest works to Mary, Shelley wrote the following beautiful lines: —

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become
A star among the stars of mortal night,
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
With thy beloved name, thou Child of Love and Light.

inspiration and actual assistance in his remarkable literary achievements. What he might ultimately have become without her we do not know, and it would be fruitless to speculate; but with her we all know what he accomplished, and we know that genius, though generally supposed to be innate, requires the proper sort of nourishment to bring it into full flower, no less than a plant requires good soil and proper husbandry. A noted biographer has said of Shelley, "That he became what he did, is in great measure due to her."

The reading of the lives of Percy and Mary Shelley, from the time of the elopement on July 28, 1814, up to the time when Shelley was drowned, on that eventful 8th of July, 1822, gives one a feeling somewhat akin to that of viewing a pair of unfortunates struggling in a vast entanglement of briars; and just as they appear to be emerging from one thicket they find themselves enmeshed in another.

From the very day of their elopement one calamity followed another in such rapid succession that their affairs became a veritable panorama of disasters, one pressing hard upon the heels of another, and oftentimes half a dozen or more overlapping,— reminding one of the

troubles of Job. Little wonder that Shelley is said to have found a peculiar attraction in this biblical story! From one side they were eternally beset by all sorts of extortionate claims and demands upon their scanty income, from another side came a perpetual rain of scandalous criticism and vituperation; from another quarter came a succession of illness, poverty, and bailiffs; then the necessity of constantly moving about hither and yon to escape arrest and imprisonment for debts incurred at ruinous rates of interest in mitigating the financial distress of Godwin and others. Inside their own household Clare Clairmont, who seemed thrust upon them for life, unexpectedly gave birth to an infant as the result of a *liaison* with Lord Byron, thereby casting public suspicion upon Shelley himself, which he was unable to allay; then the deaths, one after another, of their three children, not to mention the never-ceasing slanders and importunities of Mary's impecunious father, William Godwin, who never suffered them to remain for more than a few days at a time in ignorance of some new financial difficulty of his own. Like a ship riding a storm-tossed sea, they emerged from one troublesome mélange only to find them-

selves plunged into another. Indeed it became a sort of habit with them during occasional brief periods of comparative calm to speculate on what new catastrophe was in store for them. If anything were lacking to disturb Shelley's equanimity it was amply supplied in the form of the most villainous charges, that he had shamelessly abused Mary, conducted his house as a brothel, ruined Clare Clairmont, was responsible for the suicide of her sister Fanny, and was guilty of other pusillanimous conduct, all of which was equally annoying and repugnant to his nature. He was so maliciously persecuted and stigmatized publicly and privately that finally, in broken health and depressed spirits, he fled the country in disgust, never to return.[1] Wherever they were, at home or abroad, they lived constantly in the shadow

[1] It is not to be wondered at that "the subject Shelley loved best to dwell on was the image of one warring with the Evil Principle." Nor is it surprising that the prejudice against him operated as a barrier to any immediate public recognition of his talents, even after his legal marriage to Mary, to whom he wrote from Ravenna: "My greatest content would be to desert all human society . . . and retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea, . . . and devote either to oblivion or to future generations the overflowings of a mind which, timely withdrawn from contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object." That he did not give up in despair proves his courage and the firmness

of a deep gloom, with Pandora's Box — seemingly bottom upward — and the Sword of Damocles always suspended over their heads, both following them about as if attracted by some powerful magnet in their bodies. About the only bright or harmonious spot in their lives was their unalterable devotion to each other. If neither Shelley nor Mary had ever written a line, the story of their experiences alone would have immortalized their names.

But amid all their sorrows and joys they read, read, read, incessantly. They simply devoured Livy, Gibbon, Tacitus, Sismondi, Plutarch, Plato, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Montaigne, Rousseau, Horace, Vergil, Seneca, Sophocles, Euripides, Homer, Tasso,

of his purpose to write for "future generations." He was excoriated and admonished by his erstwhile friend Southey, the poet, then enjoying widespread popularity, but whose present fame, as compared with that of Shelley, may be likened to a tiny star in the glare of a noonday sun. Shelley bore most of his obloquy in silence, but stung by Southey's impertinence he was moved to retort: "With what care do the most tyrannical Courts of Judicature weigh evidence and surround the accused with protecting forms; with what reluctance do they pronounce their cruel and presumptuous decisions, compared with you. You select a single passage out of a life otherwise not only spotless, but spent in an impassioned pursuit of virtue, which looks like a blot merely because I regulated my domestic arrangements without deferring to the notions of the vulgar."

Theocritus, Chaucer, and dozens of others. On the day her first born died Mary recorded in her journal that in the evening she read *The Fall of the Jesuits*, and next day she read *Rinaldo Rinaldini!* With both of them, reading and study were the panacea for all ills, and they had them a-plenty,—the relaxation from all pleasures, which were indeed few. Through their multifarious troubles, however, they bore up with Spartanlike fortitude, and are said to have disguised their feelings "under a mask of cheerfulness." What a pity that Shelley did not follow his *Mask of Anarchy* with a sequel entitled, *The Mask of Cheerfulness*! If any man, woman, or child should imagine that he or she has a case of the Troubles, a reading of the Lives of Mary and Percy Shelley will instantly dispel any such illusion. And yet, as soil fertilized by the most disagreeable substances sends forth the most delicious fruits, so from the pens of these two unfortunate beings, beset by nearly every painful affliction known to mankind, we have some of the most superlative literary gems known to modern times. How, amid all their troubles, wanderings and discouragements, with no public interest in their works, they could have found impulse

or inclination to write so much is a mystery not easy to explain.

That Shelley was a great poet is a fact now recognized by everyone; that Mary Shelley was the source from which he drew much of his inspiration is a fact less widely known; but still less known is the fact that these two soulmates, even in times when their funds were at a low ebb, and the tides of their own troubles rolled highest, were ever alert to the needs and sufferings of the poor. Theirs was not the beneficence of the Lord and Lady Bountiful type, but what they lacked in amount was more than made up by the sympathy and zest with which they gave such as they had to give. They practised the principles that Shelley so assiduously preached,—the Brotherhood of Man. They worked continuously among the poor, not by emissaries, but by personal visits from cottage to cottage. When they resided at Marlow, "if they happened to be absent from home," says a biographer, "the bag of coins was left in Mrs. Maddocks' hands, to be dispensed at the end of the week by her." Mrs. Maddocks wrote to Lady Shelley in 1859: "Every spot is sacred that he visited; he was a gentleman that seldom took money about with him, and we received

numerous little billets, written sometimes on the leaf of a book, to pay the bearer the sum he specified, sometimes as much as half a crown; and one day he came home without shoes, saying that he had no paper, so he gave the poor man his shoes." On December 29, 1817, when almost destitute himself, he bought twenty heavy blankets and nearly fifty dollars' worth of sheeting which were distributed among the neighborhood's poor.

In Italy, says one who knew him there, "Shelley's constant habits of benevolence did not abate in this wild and half-inhabited region; whenever there was sickness in a house within his range, there would he be found, nursing and advising."

Perhaps the ostracism of these two souls by their contemporary world was after all a blessing in disguise, since it drew them closer together and caused them to seek their temporal happiness in each other's companionship and in acts of benevolence to those beneath their caste; while their spiritual labors were destined for the enchantment of future and more appreciative generations.

Mary Shelley occupied the extremely difficult position of being married to a literary genius,

who belonged more to the ideal than the physical world, even if in the capacity of buffer for trouble-makers he seemed to belong to any- and everybody. In his quest for ideals he displayed the same rare intuition in the selection of his second mate that he exhibited in his literary work, and after equipping himself with this important desideratum he set to his task in dead earnest, and in eight years he made for himself a name that will endure to the end of civilization. Having hitched her chariot to a comet Mary took the risk of a hard fall, but notwithstanding her trying position, with the generous accompaniment of ills and ailments, she made for both him and herself more genuine connubial joy than is allotted to the average individual in the full span of an ordinary lifetime. She entered into his life with the fixed determination to succeed, and as a successful physician must needs study the nerve forces and arteries of the human body, so she studied the vagaries and needs of the man of her choice and fitted herself to fill every niche in his life. She abandoned friends, home, country, and everything, not blinded or crazed by infatuation, but inspired by a noble purpose, and her love for Shelley. Shelley and his happiness became her

life, her earthly god, her all, and if she pleased him and helped him in attaining his ideals it mattered not if the whole world anathematized her and branded her a social outcast. In Paris, ten days after the elopement, Shelley wrote in his journal: "Mary especially seems insensible to all future evil. She feels as if our love would alone suffice to resist the invasions of calamity!" Nothing daunted, nothing mattered with her but Shelley. She determined to make herself as indispensable to him and his work as fire is necessary to a steam engine, or a dynamo to an electric light — and by dint of hard work she succeeded. In running away with him, a married man, she was prompted by no spirit of lewdness, romance, or adventure; she was intelligent, far beyond her years, and wide awake to the consequences; it was no light or frivolous affair; it was a serious business with her; she knew they would both be ostracized and isolated, but that was of no relative importance; she had an aim in life, and that was to help Shelley in the fulfillment of his laudable ambition. The fault-finding world could go hang; if she accomplished her design they would soon enough be fawning at his feet, and his ultimate triumph would be her sufficient recompense. With her

inherent talents and her serious studious nature she would doubtless have made for herself a greater name than she did with Shelley's ultimate fame overshadowing hers, but Shelley's renown was of far more concern to her than her own. After Shelley's death she wrote to her friend Mrs. Gisborne: "I would not change my situation as his widow with that of the most prosperous woman in the world."

From neither of her parents did Mary inherit any orthodox ideas affecting intolerable marriage relations; therefore she suffered no scruples of conscience in accepting Shelley's love, especially after she had taken at its surface value the assurance that his wife had proved false to her marriage vows. By an onerous decree of the law he might belong to another, but she felt that by a higher law his love belonged to her, and that she was committing no crime in accepting what someone had cast aside and did not own or care for. A horse tied to a stake would soon consume all the verdure within its reach and then perish of hunger; there could be no offence either against God or any just-minded human being in rescuing it from such a fate. Shelley was so constituted that a loving, congenial companion was no less

needful than food and drink to the fulfillment of his happiness and his ideals; and she did not intend that he should lack any stimulus that it was within her power to supply, as long as she lived—and he never did. Her one dream of happiness was to make him happy, regardless of all else, and so far as is known she never sought in any way to promote her own well being except in so far as it should be reflected from his own. Whatever may have been charged against her by her detractors, they never found cause to accuse her of a single act or thought disloyal to Shelley, either during his lifetime or thereafter.

Mary's daring exploit with Shelley was duplicated forty years later by George Eliot and George Henry Lewes who, disregarding society's conventions, united their destinies and fled to Germany where, after living together for sometime, they eventually surmounted the impediments of Lewes's former marriage, and were said to have been married in conformity with German laws, after which they returned and took up their residence in London. Owing to the great prominence of both parties this escapade caused a tremendous furor, but later their *salon* at North Bank, in the northwest

of London, became widely famed as the rendezvous of the intelligentsia of Europe — the frequent haunt of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Browning, Tennyson, Du Maurier, Turgénieff, and many others, including our American historian, John Fiske. Like Shelley and Mary, these two congenial spirits amalgamated their love and their talents, greatly to the enrichment of English literature.

Mary Shelley, though young and beautiful, never remarried. She was ardently courted by John Howard Payne, the American author of "Home, Sweet Home," whose genius and friendship kindled her admiration, but not her heart. —"What a strange life mine has been!" she wrote in her journal; "Love, youth, fear, and fearlessness led me early from the regular routine of life, and I united myself to this being, who, not one of *us*, though like to us, was pursued by numberless miseries and annoyances, in all of which I shared. . . . But that is gone. His voice can no longer be heard; the earth no longer receives the shadow of his form; annihilation has come over the earthly appearance of the most gentle creature that ever yet breathed this air; and I am still here — still thinking, existing, all but hoping."

And again, on November 10, following Shelley's death: "What a delight it is to be associated with a superior! Mine own Shelley! the sun knows of none to be likened to you — brave, wise, noble-hearted, full of learning, tolerance, and love. Love! what a word for me to write! Yet, my miserable heart, permit me yet to love, — to see him in beauty, to feel him in beauty, to be interpenetrated by the sense of his excellence; and thus to love singly, eternally, ardently, and not fruitlessly; for I am still his — still the chosen one of that blessed spirit — still vowed to him for ever and ever!"

BOOKS AND BIBLIOPHILES

BOOKS AND BIBLIOPHILES

It may be said that one point of difference between a bibliophile and a bibliomaniac is that the former collects books because he likes them, while the latter collects them because someone else wants them. One ambition of the bibliomaniac is to possess books which are unique or in some way different from those owned by his fellow-collectors. If by some misfortune a whole edition were to perish, except one copy, the owner of that copy would never tire of boasting over his possession, no matter if a dozen later editions were issued. He would at least have the only copy of the *first edition.*

There have been instances where books have been purchased and wantonly destroyed by zealous bibliomaniacs in order that the existing copies might become more scarce and valuable. There are many books the chief glory in the ownership of which lies in the consciousness of their scarcity; hence the greater value generally attached to limited editions.

The numerous whimsicalities of book-collectors have encouraged publishers and private presses in all sorts of freakish notions in bookmaking. Various styles of odd types are invented, not because they are beautiful or that they possess any apparent virtue, but because they are queer and unlike other more readable types. Grotesque ideas and vagaries may occupy the fancy for a time, but it is safe to say that books printed in plain, legible type, on good paper, and made up with due regard to the consistencies of ordinary bookmaking will always hold their own, and ultimately triumph over whimsical fantasies, which are generally of ephemeral duration. One of the first requirements of the book-buyer should be plain, readable type that can be read without injuring one's eyesight. This important matter is too often overlooked by both the publisher and the reader. Almost any book-collector will find that he has hundreds of volumes which are not worth a penny to him, except to fill up space, because the type is too small to be easily and restfully read.

Although in the publications of The Bibliophile Society a variety of types have been employed, they have been of recognized and

acceptable standards; and, in selecting type, legibility has been the first consideration. While we may introduce an original idea now and then in a modern book, resulting in a genuine improvement, due care must be observed that the innovations be not too violent, or wholly adverse to conservative precedent.

It frequently happens that club books and other privately printed editions of which there are but a few copies issued are in some respects inferior to other publications designed for wider circulation; but it should be remembered that in proportion as the number of sets is reduced the expense per copy is correspondingly increased, and in order not to have the cost appear disproportionately if not ridiculously high, the edition of only a few copies is usually to a greater or less extent divested of the chief attractive features of bookmaking, such as specially designed and engraved title-pages, etched or photogravure illustrations, facsimiles, etc. All of these features add greatly to the cost, but they likewise enhance the attractiveness of the book. It is far better, however, that they be omitted entirely than that the eye be offended by the insertion of cheap process reproductions. Beautiful specimens of

presswork on fine handmade paper will condone for the absence of pictorial embellishments and other accessories, but the combined skill of all the artists and engravers in the country could not retrieve a book which has been poorly printed from inappropriate type on inferior paper, with ill-balanced pages set within scanty margins.

It is curious to observe that in announcing a new book which is to have a very restricted circulation, and is designed to appeal chiefly to so-called collectors, an enterprising publisher will sometimes put forth as one of the conspicuous and essentially desirable qualities the fact that the work is printed on an "old-fashioned hand press." There is about as much justification for a publisher who in these times advertises a book as having been printed on a "hand press" as there would be for a milling concern to proclaim a special brand of flour made from wheat that had been cut with a sickle, thrashed out with a flail, and ground with a pair of old-fashioned millstones, turned by hand power. A sack of flour, if made a hundred years ago by primitive methods such as were then in vogue, would (were it possible to preserve it) be an interesting relic of the past, but antiqui-

ties are of little worth when they are of modern manufacture.

It is ridiculous to suppose that better printing can be done on a rickety old hand press, or even a new hand press, than may be obtained from the modern cylinder press or the Adams press, embodying the most perfect development of mechanical skill.[1] It is true that the hasty and perfunctory work turned out by some of the printers nowadays does not compare favorably with the deliberate and painstaking labor employed in producing some of the old masterpieces of printing that have been handed down to us; but such inferior work is not fairly representative of the present improved facilities for good presswork. While Caxton, Wynkin de Worde and a few others were masters of their craft in their own day, the quality of their work would not be equal to the demands of the present age.

Cheap commercial printing done in forms carrying thirty-two or sixty-four pages is an

[1] Apprehending that my remarks upon this subject may antagonize the firmly grounded convictions of many of my esteemed bookloving friends, I have taken the precaution to get the views of Mr. Theodore L. DeVinne, the most distinguished authority in this country on types and printing, and his interesting remarks are printed as an appendix at the end of this article.

entirely different proposition from fine work, where only eight or sixteen pages are run together. A vastly more competent set of pressmen are required for the finer work, more expensive ink is used, more time and care are required, and the cost is multiplied several times. It will be remembered, moreover, that since it is usually the best that survives longest, the models of printing preserved from the early days were exceptional pieces in their own time. A verification of this fact will be found by any one who will take the trouble to examine the average specimens of early printing.

There are some discerning persons who bemoan the fact that it is utterly impossible to do as good printing now as was done hundreds of years ago. I have seen devoted booklovers draw their hands caressingly over the pages of some old masterpiece, with the accompanying remark that "such work has never been equalled by modern presses." It is all sheer imagination. Their bookish love for some antiquated darling has blinded their vision to whatever imperfections it may have, and carried the object of their devotion beyond the boundaries of comparison, just as every man imagines the girl of his choice to be the most

perfect and incomparable flower in the garden of civilization; and as long as *he* thinks so, why should others dispute his claim? He couldn't be convinced to the contrary,— for the time being, at least.

It would be manifestly cruel to attempt the disenchantment of a zealous bibliomaniac who raves over the typographical beauties and other superior qualities of some old almanac. If those modern books which are presumptively made for the gratification of the bibliophile fall short of some of the old paragons of printing, when judged by a disenthralled mind, it is either because a poor printer has been employed, or because a good one has been poorly paid.

There is a strong predilection on the part of most of us to pay undue homage to the dogmas and ideals of bygone times, and to reverence especially those mixed metaphors and anomalies of speech which are not readily understandable. We are prone to resign ourselves to many old customs and standards of doubtful consistency, merely because they were inherited from our forefathers and taught to us by our instructors, without stopping to consider whether they are sane or not. The extent to which delusive ideas are sometimes overindulged in our blind

adoration of the works of ancient writers may be practically illustrated by relating a recent circumstance by which I put the question to a test.

I composed a few lines of verse which I showed to a friend who enjoys the distinction of being a literary critic of rather more than ordinary ability. I misinformed him that it was an important literary "find," and that it had been copied from a manuscript of great antiquity discovered in the library of an old nobleman in some obscure part of Europe; that owing to some inadvertency it had never been printed with the published works of its author. My friend read it over once rather hurriedly, and again, more deliberately and with apparent avidity. He complimented me upon my good fortune in having found it, and remarked,— "I don't know why it is that the works of poets of the present day are so inferior to those of the past. Now," he continued, "it would be impossible to find such poetry as that in the writings of any modern poet." And I presume he was right.

There is a very prevalent (and I think oftentimes mistaken) impression that great antiquity in art and literary compositions is an

almost certain indication of merit; although Emerson said, —

> Give me insight into today, and you may have the *antique* and future worlds.

In the poetical effusions of the past we are continually discovering new interpretations and recondite meanings of which the authors themselves probably never dreamed. Since they were only mortal men, there is but little excuse for those inquisitive persons who are perpetually probing for obscure significations in their verses, and drawing therefrom fanciful deductions which border on the supernatural. The ambiguity and abstruseness of certain parts of many poetical compositions are undoubtedly such as will admit of almost any construction that the reader may wish to place upon them (and indeed we are not always obliged to resort to the works of *ancient* writers in order to verify this fact); but all that the poet really meant, if he had any clearly defined idea in his own mind, is usually manifest to the reader of average intelligence, and vague conjectures upon the part of students implying superhuman tendencies in the author are therefore wholly gratuitous. A medley of words is often

played upon by a writer in order to span the interval from one rational idea to another, just as a tuneful opera will contain some connecting measures which are far from melodious.

It is absurd to contend that the writers of antiquity were any more inspired than were the best writers of more recent times. It would be no less ridiculous to assume that the typesetters and printers were also inspired personages because a few misguided people imagine that their work has never been rivaled in modern times. If the immortal Homer were with us in the present age, writing under some other name, no publisher in the country would find it profitable to print his works.

If literary anglers who cast their lines deep down into the poetry of the past in search of some startling revelation would set their corks for shallower water and confine their scrutiny to nearer the surface, they would probably obtain more accurate estimates of the *raison d'être*. In this connection I am reminded of a recent episode which may be opportunely related.

A short time ago I employed an artist to make a pen drawing of an old bibliophile standing before an open fireplace, with his back to

the fire, so deeply engrossed in a book that he was oblivious of the fact that his long coat tails had caught fire and were burning briskly. The subject was rather interesting, and I had the artist make a large oil painting of it. He employed sufficiently lurid colors to depict the flames, which were rapidly consuming the bibliophile's coat tails, while he read on unperturbed. This was the central figure, and the remainder of the picture consisted merely of unimportant accessories. After the painting was finished the artist desired to show it to some of his friends, and so retained it for a few days during which time it occupied a central position in his studio, and was much admired and commented upon. One day a friend came to the studio and was looking around at the various pictures, when finally his eye rested on the latest masterpiece; and as he stood gazing intently at the subject, the artist drew himself up with pardonable self-complacency and awaited some expression of approval. Presently the friend turned to him in apparent astonishment and remarked, "Why, the man's coat tail is afire!"

Returning again to our subject, and referring now more particularly to prose writers and

historical novelists, it has often happened that a writer has produced one or two literary masterpieces upon which his fame and immortality securely rest, whereas a large portion of his works, both earlier and later, would be classed as mediocre if set apart to stand solely upon their separate merits. A sudden flash of genius will sometimes produce an immortal work and set for the author a standard which he may never again succeed in approaching. If the manuscript of Gray's "Elegy"— which is now read oftener and by more people than any other poem ever written — had been destroyed without being printed, its author's name would now be lost in oblivion. Let it not be supposed that because the Muses have once been kind, their continued favor can be relied upon with assurance. Thalia is a shy and coquettish goddess, and is not famed for her constancy. She is not therefore likely always to be at hand when needed.

There is an undue tendency to imagine that almost every line from the pen of a writer who has attained a great name should be deemed beyond criticism; but there is no more foundation for this exorbitant notion than there is to suppose that every act and thought in the life

of a man is wholly irreproachable, because in a spasm of public-spirited generosity he founded a library in his home town. After a man is gone, we usually try to forget those acts or characteristics in his life which were incompatible with his more dominant and exemplary qualities. Why, then, should not the same rule apply to the inferior works of authors and artists?

The fame of an author is even made retroactive in its bearing upon his early literary efforts, and all of his juvenile and experimental productions (no matter how commonplace they may have appeared "before his fame had ripened," as Charles Lamb says) assume an air of great importance when through some unusual display of genius he has sprung into popular favor. The publisher will then search out and print every unimportant thesis of the author's school-days;—every recorded infantile reverie immediately assumes a highly important aspect. Readers will forthwith begin to discover hidden meanings and merits in all the desultory compositions, and the whole of the author's works, both good and bad, become suddenly diffused with the most classical flavor; the great horde of new adorers will marvel at their own stu-

pidity in not discovering his genius before it was born.

As the discovery of the sources of great rivers is of the utmost interest to the geographer, so is it true that all of the early pieces constitute useful biographical helps in the study of an author's life and career, and especially in retracing the successive incidents and early struggles along his path to fame. First editions of these are likewise valuable *desiderata* for wealthy collectors to toy with. But this affords no cogent reason why a person in search of a library edition should feel obliged to buy fifty or sixty volumes of a work when the contents of no more than a dozen or twenty of them are especially desirable. A famous philosopher once said that "a writer is quite as often compelled to write, that he may fill an empty column as that he may relieve an overfilled brain."

The late practice of publishers in issuing costly uniform editions of the entire collected works of the historical novelists who have written at great length has been the means of filling with dismay numberless possible buyers; more particularly those who are lacking either in funds or library space,— and most people are deficient in one or the other, or indeed both.

A person of modest means and with ambitions to equip the home with a library soon becomes discouraged with the undertaking, for the reason that before gathering complete editions of one-half of the standard writers the available space is all filled, and the cost has run far beyond outside calculations. In these times of rapid evolution we scarcely get a set of books comfortably installed in the library before a publishers' agent comes along with a new and more complete edition and tells us that ours is antiquated and out of date. It might be a timely hint to suggest to publishers that they devote more energy to the making of fine editions of the best selected works of the more prolific writers, so that discriminating book-buyers could procure desirable copies of such as they want without being compelled to purchase others which they do not want.

If it now costs $130,000 to buy a set of the latest editon of the complete works of Charles Dickens, which is issued in one hundred and thirty volumes, it might be interesting to guess what a *complete* set of Kipling could be made to cost a hundred years hence. The human imaginative powers have their limitations, and are not sufficiently elastic to indulge in any such

extravagant conjectures, although the wildest fancies of today may appear tame and commonplace when measured by the standards of the book publishers of the future.

It is an incontrovertible fact that with many readers the author's name carries more weight as a factor in determining the merit of a composition than what the composition itself really contains. This has been proved by many trial tests; and very recently it was exemplified in taking a story by a renowned writer, and changing the names and places, after which it was offered to the magazines. Not a single one of them regarded it as having sufficient merit to be printed; and yet any of them would gladly have paid a fabulous sum for it had not the name of the author been changed. His name alone would have insured its acceptance by any magazine or publisher without even consulting the literary censor.[1] This sort of servile veneration has encouraged writers of late years to venture unduly upon their reputations; and it is not uncommon for the writings of modern novelists to occupy thirty to sixty large vol-

[1] It is by no means certain, however, that the literary editors of the magazines discredited themselves in the least, or that anything more than ordinary vigilance was exercised.

umes, as will be seen by the list which appears a little further along. It would almost exceed the boundaries of reason to conceive that any person could, within the customary allotted lifetime, produce so great a number of volumes of a high order of literature.

A leader among men may appeal to his advisers for counsel upon an important undertaking, but he will reserve the right to weigh the relevancy of the advice before determining upon final action. He may adopt one or more valuable ideas suggested by any one counsellor without feeling obliged to accept other less expedient persuasions of the same person. Likewise, in selecting books for the library, we may choose from the works of several authors one or more of the best productions, or such as appeal to our tastes, without feeling ourselves burdened with the necessity of encumbering our library shelves with numberless volumes of rambling disquisitions in which we have no interest.

To what longevity would we aspire if we should hope to read and digest sixty volumes of Dumas, fifty-five volumes of Balzac, fifty-four volumes of Dickens, fifty volumes of Hugo, sixty volumes of Scott, thirty volumes

of Thackeray, forty volumes of Bulwer Lytton, not to mention the recent hundred-volume edition of Paul de Kock, and perhaps a hundred other works ranging in extent from ten to fifty volumes each? The complete works of the eminent American writers alone would provide reading for almost a lifetime, and yet not one of them is enumerated in the foregoing list.

If the future generations do not adopt the "weeding out" process, and observe a higher degree of discrimination in the choice of books than prevails today they will surely require more commodious library quarters, as well as more bountiful purses, in order to gratify a fondness for book-collecting. However, Nature generally provides her own remedies: time corrects many evils, and as stagnant and impure water cast into the stream purifies itself in its onward flow, so will the true germs of literature survive the chaff, which will in due process of time fall away and become lost in oblivion.

It is a mistake to imagine that in order to be well appointed a library must contain "complete collected editions" of all of these voluminous writers. The best compositions of all the authors mentioned here, together with practically the whole of the choicest literature extant,

both ancient and modern, can be accommodated within the space of a moderate-sized library room, and at a cost less than one-quarter of the price demanded for a single copy of a recent edition of the works of Charles Dickens.

While it may be safe to assume that the apotheosized writers of the past have justly earned their laurels, it does not follow as a necessary consequence that we should blindly and unreservedly accept their entire works as indispensable library companions.

It is not my purpose in this chatty discourse to trespass upon any of the functions which belong properly to the lecturer or critic, but it has frequently struck me as a regrettable oversight that some one did not give a few of the English and French novelists a hint on the virtues of brevity and compactness. The fullest enjoyment of a good story is often sacrificed by too frequent digressions. When deeply engrossed in an entertaining book we do not like to be interrupted every few minutes by an unwelcome caller or by other untimely distractions, and no more do we like to have the author continually bothering us by leaving the trend of the story and carrying us off to first one place, then another where he may have an

imaginary errand in which we haven't the slightest concern, and from which we are impatient to return to our story. We are not in the mood upon such occasions to enjoy long, tedious descriptions of irrelevant persons, objects, and places, and lofty flights of rhetorical fancy any more than, if taking a journey, we would relish being sidetracked every now and then for no better excuse than that the engineer has decided to take us butterfly chasing across the fields.

Some say we have no right to criticize, when we could do no better ourselves. It would be equally absurd to maintain that we should have no voice in the building of a house which we are to live in, because we are not skilled in the knowledge of how to mix the mortar and lay the bricks. Authors write to live,— they do not live merely to write; hence they are dependent upon those to whom they look for patronage, just as we are all dependent upon the bounty or patronage of those to whom we look for support or favor in one way or another. If readers were more critical and less tolerant of the obvious faults of writers, it might be the means of giving authors a cue, and also of discouraging those who having acquired something of a

reputation proceed to market their multifarious products at so much per page.

Lowell said that we are too much inclined to "become what we habitually read. We let our newspapers think for us, argue for us, criticize for us, remember for us, do everything for us, in short, that will save us from the misfortune of being *ourselves*. And so, instead of men and women, we find ourselves in a world inhabited by incarnated leaders, or paragraphs, or items of this or that journal. We are apt to wonder at the scholarship of the men of two centuries ago. . . . We spend more time over print than they did, but instead of communing with the choice thought of choice spirits, and insensibly acquiring the grand manner of that supreme society, we diligently inform ourselves of such facts as that a fine horse belonging to Mr. Smith ran away on Wednesday, and that a son of Mr. Brown fell into the canal on Thursday, or that a gravel bank fell in and buried Patrick O'Callahan on Friday. And it is our own fault, and not that of the editor. For *we* make the newspapers, and the editor would be glad to give us better stuff if we did not *demand* such as this.

"Another evil of this state of things is the

watering, or milk-and-watering, of our English. Writing to which there is no higher compelling destiny than the coming of the printer's devil must end in this at last. The paragraphist must make his paragraph, and the longer he makes it, the better for him and the worse for us. The virtue of words becomes wholly a matter of length. Accordingly, we have now no longer any fires, but 'disastrous conflagrations;' nobody dies, but 'deceases' or 'demises;' men do not fall from houses, but are 'precipitated from mansions or edifices;' a convict is not hanged, but 'suffers the extreme penalty of the offended law,' etc."

The following are Mr. DeVinne's letters, referred to at page 65:—

New York, December 5, 1906.

Mr. H. H. Harper,
Boston, Mass.

My dear Mr. Harper,— I hasten to acknowledge with thanks your last kind note. It pleases me much to know that you are going to combat some of the foolish prejudices of book-collectors. What you have written is entirely satisfactory. I have nothing to correct, but I may have some little to add, from a printer's point of view. This addition I will make as soon as I can collect my thoughts, which are rather scattered just now, when I will return what you have lent me.

Many years ago Oliver Wendell Holmes said nobody needed stated preaching more than preachers. They did all the talking, hearing but little. Nobody needs a broader knowledge of early printing than the many amateur collectors of old books. I will go as far as any one in admiration for some of the good features of old books, but it is time that their defects should be noticed. With this purpose I have been collecting facsimiles of early Italian books in Roman type, and have had facsimiles taken of full pages by photo-engraving, so that a hasty reader can see and compare. I shall add some comments; but the attraction of the book will be in about twenty good facsimiles that I propose now to print on Mittineague paper in large quarto form.

Yours cordially,

THEO. L. DEVINNE

New York, December 17, 1906.

Mr. H. H. Harper,
Boston, Mass.

My dear Mr. Harper,— I beg pardon for my delay in fulfilling my promise. I should have answered you more fully a week ago, but I have not been able to do so. Even now I can do no more than add some remarks that seem to me most pertinent about old books.

As to the hand-press.— What you have said seems to be ample. Two hundred years ago Moxon denounced the old hand-press as "a make-shift, slovenly contrivance," and indeed it was. Its great merit now is its slowness, which compels the hand-pressman to see the work done by him with great minuteness, and helps him,

if he is able to be helped, in the correction of faults. It does not, however, make him skillful or careful if he is lacking in those qualities. Hand-press work as a rule is much inferior to Adams or cylinder presswork. It ought not to be, but it is.

As to type.—The type of early printers is vastly overrated. It brings to mind the observation of a London wit on the immense canvases of an old London painter known as Hayden: "He thinks he is a great painter because he paints with a big brush." Imitators of old typography consider big leaves, large type, and over black presswork the tests of meritorious printing. For four hundred years and more, type-founders, many of them men of remarkable ability, have carefully studied the structure of letters and have profited by the rules laid down by Albert Durer, Geofroy Tory, and others; but there is not one who has faithfully, or even fairly, copied early Italian models. Let me make one exception: the Ashendene Press did copy and improve the Roman types of Sweinheim and Pannartz, Subiaco, 1465. I do not consider the Golden type of William Morris a fair copy of the types of Nicolas Jenson. Type-founding is an art of slow growth. Types are made better now than they were centuries ago. They have been made to serve the uses of the reader for every variety of work from a miniature Bible or a prayer-book to a poster, and they answer their purpose satisfactorily.

As to composition.—The books of the fifteenth century are hard to read, even by good Latinists. The early printers, imitating the practice of scribes, who were

economical in the use of paper and vellum, ran paragraphs together in broad measure without the slightest relief of white space. They seemed to hate this relief of white. I have many books of that period that have lines from five to six inches wide, and the pages from forty to fifty lines long, in which there is not the least break of white in chapters of fifteen or twenty pages. What is worse, many of them are deformed by profuse abbreviations. I give, as much as anybody ought to give, proper homage to early printers who undertook the practice of an excessively difficult art with untrained hands and imperfect materials, and I admire them for the relatively meritorious nature of their work; but I do not think their printing perfection or even a close approximation to perfection.

I may tolerate chairs that are so frail and gorgeous with gold and brocade that they are too weak to be used. I can tolerate windows that were made to shut out light and show stained glass; but I will not tolerate as a specimen of fine workmanship a book that has been so mistakenly treated in composition that it cannot be easily read.

As to presswork.—The types of the early German printers are, as a rule, much over colored. They were purposely made so to give a proper devotional gloominess to the print. No person of taste now wants types of thick face over inked. The types of the early Italian printers were at the opposite extreme. Those who stand highest in popular esteem tried to imitate the lightness and delicacy of early Italian penmanship. This preference for a reasonable amount of lightness and openness

has been maintained ever since in acceptable Roman types. The presswork of early Italian books is remarkably unequal. The prints of Sweinheim and Pannartz are too black; those of Jenson are too light; those of famous printers in other Italian cities are thick and muddy on some pages and feeble in color and impression on others. They did their best under difficult conditions and I honor them; but I see no reason why we should set them up as models. We have our own standards of merit and demerit and we must judge them by these standards.

As to paper.— It is a common mistake to think that early handmade paper was invariably thick and coarse. The paper preferred by Italian printers as a rule was thin and smooth. The rough faced paper now preferred by amateurs in old books was avoided; what will be more surprising to many is the frequency with which unsized paper was used in books printed by Aldus, Ratdolt, and Renner.

Yours truly,

THEO. L. DEVINNE

THE DISPERSION OF PRIVATE LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

THE DISPERSION OF PRIVATE LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

THE DISPOSITION to be made of private libraries after the death of those by whom they are established is a subject of vital interest to bibliophiles. There is a more or less firmly grounded conviction in the minds of many persons that valuable private collections of books and manuscripts should not be dispersed; that the Public Library, the Historical Society, or the Museum should be the ultimate destination of all such accumulations, where they may be kept intact as a monument to the skill and devotion of the owners. With all due respect to the tender sympathies and sentimentalities of such persons, I am forced to disagree with this view.

The consignment of a collection of rare books to a public institution, encompassed by the usual restrictions governing such bequests is practically equivalent to a ceremonious interment, for they are seldom viewed except by an occasional curiosity seeker, on special occasions

when they are exhibited in glass cases. Then one is permitted to stand and stare at them, as one would view an Egyptian mummy in a glass-covered sarcophagus, — and with pretty much the same sensations. Fully one half the pleasure of examining a rare book is derived from the sense of touch. Paintings and curios are made to look at, but books are made to handle, to turn the leaves, and to read. A book-lover's library treasures are generally regarded as his friends and companions. Is it desirable that when a man dies his friends and bosom companions shall be simultaneously buried, or sent to prison, or otherwise denied the privelege of affiliating with other surviving comrades? Is it not better that one's book friends, as well as one's animate friends, be allowed to seek other associations and environment among the living, and go on from one to another, contributing to the happiness of humanity as they have done in the past? Books are made for the delectation, enlightenment, and companionship of the human race— not to be hoarded in obscure places as a rendezvous for vermin and a lodging place for dust. If only one or two copies of a meritorious book be known to exist, of course it is important that at least one be

placed in some public repository where it may be safeguarded from destruction by fire or otherwise.

It is a highly commendable act of charity to bequeath an accumulation of scientific works or other serviceable books to a public institution where they may render ready and continued service to those who are unable to equip themselves with the necessary working libraries, but this is entirely different from the act of storing away rarities and superlative examples of the bookmaker's art, the chief delights of which lie in their actual ownership. In addition to the useful books with which the ordinary private library is usually equipped, every booklover has a few choice "show-books," in the mere possession of which there is a keen delight; and there is always the added joy of showing them to friends and others of congenial tastes.

It may be argued by the non-bookloving inheritor of a library that it would be a sacrilege to destroy a monument in the construction of which a lifetime has been devotedly spent, and that the act of scattering a library would imply a lack of decent respect for the diligent and painstaking exertions of the builder; and yet if by dispersing the structural parts of one mon-

ument which has outlived the purpose for which it was erected, the foundations of a hundred others may be greatly strengthened, the act would appear to be justifiable. Every collector should remember that many of the facilities he has enjoyed in garnering his books would have been denied him had not other collections been dispersed.

A booklover will usually take pains to explain, when showing some volume which caused a lively scrimmage among bidders in the auction room, where he came off victorious, that "This is from the collection of the late Mr. ——." "See," he will remark, as he raises the front cover, "here is his bookmark." He had probably been waiting years for that particular book to turn up somewhere, and he is prouder of his achievement in having distanced his rivals in the pursuit of it than he would be had he made a thousand times its cost in some business venture. The collection from which his copy was procured may have contained a hundred other treasures of equal desirability, and for which a multitude of collectors had long lain in ambush, hoping that they would some time make their appearance in the open market.

The highest compliment that can be paid to

the good taste and unerring judgment of a bibliophile is that his library possessions be made the objects of spirited contest among bidders in the auction room. One of the keenest delights of every unselfish book-collector should be the comforting thought that after his demise his cherished books will find a comfortable resting-place amidst congenial surroundings. It is inconceivable that a bibliophile could be so selfish as wilfully to entomb his collection beyond the reach of his fellow-booklovers for the sole purpose of denying others the pleasures that he has enjoyed. It would almost seem that the images of the books themselves would rise up before him and protest against such a perpetual imprisonment.

I once heard a man remark that he intended that his books should go to some public institution, because, he said, he did not intend to leave his valuable books for others to "paw over." This reasoning strikes me as being illogical, for nothing short of bigotry would cause one to imagine himself the only person competent to judge and appreciate the value of good books, and to take proper care of them.

In disposing of the library, a booklover parts with that which, next to his family, is usually

dearest to his heart, and for this reason its future welfare is generally a matter of earnest solicitude; particularly if those to whom his worldly goods are to be left do not happen to inherit his own impulses in this direction. Of course if any member of the family participates in his bookloving propensities, the library should by all means be kept intact; but rather than eject the books from their comfortable home and cart them off to be incarcerated within the walls of some public institution, it is better that they be sent at once to the auction room, where they may be dispersed and placed with those who will treasure them as they were treasured by their former owner; then the public libraries and other institutions would have an opportunity to purchase such items as they desire.

If a generous bibliophile wishes to do something handsome for a favorite Public Library or Historical Society, an excellent plan would be for him to direct that his own collection be sold (only in case the family does not share his bookish tendencies) and the proceeds applied as an endowment fund to be drawn upon by the trustees for the purchase of such works as come within their needs and means. By this method

other booklovers are given an opportunity of enriching their collections, and the public institution, instead of being encumbered with a lot of books for which it has but little if any practical use, and probably no adequate room, is at liberty to expend the proceeds in such time and manner as befits its requirements. Public Libraries frequently acquire by gift two or more copies of some valuable book, but with such restrictions that it is impossible to dispose of any of them. It would be well if more book-collectors would take cognizance of the following pertinent extract from the will of the distinguished Edmond de Goncourt: —

> My wish is that my Drawings, my Prints, my Curiosities, my Books — in a word these things of art which have been the joy of my life — shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum, and subjected to the stupid glance of the careless passer-by; but I require that they shall all be dispersed under the hammer of the Auctioneer, so that the pleasure which the acquiring of each one of them has given me shall be given again, in each case, to some inheritor of my own tastes.

Not a great many years ago it was a common occurrence for Caxtons, first folio Shakespeares, and numerous other items of greater or less importance to come to the auction block,

but these have nearly all disappeared into collections which are not likely ever to be dispersed. There are very few of us who now get even a sight of the rarities of a hundred years ago, and the hope of possessing them would indeed be forlorn. Most of the rare books mentioned by Dibdin are buried in oblivion, as far as the would-be purchaser is concerned, and we must be content to read of them and marvel at the short-sightedness of our forefathers in not "picking them up" with more avidity. However, there are more obtainable books now which will be extremely valuable fifty years hence than there were all together a hundred years ago. There are quantities of first editions easily procurable now, but which in another generation will be difficult to obtain. Many of the issues of our own Bibliophile Society — especially the first printed editions from important manuscripts — will doubtless take their place among the books that will live and find a cordial welcome among the book-collectors of future generations.

In closing, I may add that since the museum is the logical repository for curiosities and monstrosities, I will except from those books which should not be placed therein certain specimens

of modern book-curios made for the use of a class of so-called "agents" as an apologetic means in their attempts to relieve wealthy men and women of large sums of money,— the amounts ranging sometimes as high as $150,-000,— depending upon the resources and presumable gullibility of the victim.

A few years ago I knew of a man who had accumulated a very good library of the works of standard authors issued in good editions by various reputable publishing houses. He had perhaps twelve to fifteen thousand dollars' worth of desirable books. One day he was approached by a pompous personage, "just over from London,"— who had some of the outward manifestations of a gentleman,— and was induced to subscribe for a very costly set of books, in part payment for which he gave a considerable portion of the books in his library (on most of which he was allowed liberal fictitious premiums), and the balance, amounting to several thousand dollars, was to be paid in cash, on the instalment plan. After he had made a few payments, another agent came along and inveigled him into taking a much more expensive set of books, the agreement being that the high-priced set which the first man had sold him, together

with mostly all of the remainder of his other books, should be accepted as part payment,— all being credited at figures greatly above their cost, in order to mislead the purchaser into thinking that he was making a handsome profit. The sum still to be paid, however, was much in excess of the combined cost of the original library and the first expensive set purchased. The victim was eventually forced into bankruptcy, and besides having lost his whole library he was still in debt many thousands of dollars for a set of books, of which only a small portion had been delivered.

I should like to extend this article so as to include a few remarks upon the personalities of three or four noteworthy bibliophiles of the past and present, but lack of both time and space prohibit such extended observations at this time. We are all consciously indebted, however, to one bibliophile in particular, and of whom our unstinted tribute of praise deserves here to be permanently recorded.

In the person of Mr. William K. Bixby, the present generation has produced a man who is in many respects a unique character in the world's history of bibliophiles; he is a veritable conception of the Maecenas and Jean Grolier

types combined in one; and the members of The Bibliophile Society have been so fortunate as to become the beneficiaries of his singular munificence. The abundant wealth which he has laid as a requisition upon manuscripts of merit, both published and unpublished, has been the means of bringing from obscure hiding places a great number of items which have proved to be of inestimable literary and historical worth, and which might otherwise have been destroyed or lost forever.

Although Mr. Bixby has built a special fireproof room in his commodious home wherein to preserve these treasures from destruction, this has not been deemed a sufficient preservative measure against their ultimate loss to the world, and at the aggregate expense of a moderate fortune he has printed a number of them privately, and presented copies to friends, libraries, and Historical Societies throughout the land. All this has been done without ostentation. He has, moreover, given a large number of unprinted manuscripts exclusively to The Bibliophile Society to print, in order that his fellow-bibliophiles might share the enjoyment of his priceless treasures; and, furthermore, that printed copies thereof may be disseminated

for the benefit of posterity. His generous benefactions have been the means of enriching hundreds of public and private libraries all over the country; and the most commendable phase of his generosity is that his gifts, whether to individuals or to organizations, are always unconditional, and unaccompanied by any restrictions or injunctions. It is doubtful if any generation has ever produced a more munificent, broad-minded, and unselfish bibliophile; certainly these ascendant qualities in Mr. Bixby are unexcelled in the present age. Future generations of booklovers, also, will have ample cause to applaud his fame, which —

> Will be growing, always growing
> In posterity's acclaim;

and the numerous and enduring evidences of his beneficence toward mankind will add —

> Freshness and vigor to the praise
> His name shall reap in after days.

"HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHOR"

"HOW TO BECOME AN AUTHOR"

THE ABOVE title on a modest-looking booklet suddenly arrested my attention one afternoon while I was browsing leisurely about in an old bookshop. It purported to be a comprehensive treatise on how to achieve success as a writer — what to do, and especially what not to do — all for the sum of fifteen cents. I bought the book and started for home with the implied secret to successful authorship tucked carefully away in my pocket. It seeems strange, I thought, that so many would-be writers flounder about in the darkness of incompetency, and consequent obscurity, when for a mere trifle they might purchase the lamp of success, all filled and trimmed!

That night I gave the pamphlet a careful reading. Some parts of it I read twice, some three times. Here, for example, is one of the so-called lucid passages under "Laws of Style" that I studied heedfully in order to get it firmly embedded in my mind: —

The constituent elements of the conception expressed in the sentence and the paragraph should be arranged in strict correspondence with an inductive or deductive progression.

What a facile thing it must be to become a writer! Here we find the laws of style proclaimed, explained, and disposed of all in one sentence!

Following this the author remarked that "it is surprising how few men understand that style is a fine art." The foregoing passage would seem to make the fact sufficiently obvious.

A little farther along I found the "Laws of Climax" elucidated as follows:—

The phrase or image which in one position will have a mild power of occupying the thoughts, or stimulating the emotions, loses this power if made to succeed one of like kind but more agitating influence, and will gain an accession of power if it be artfully placed on the wave of climax.

In mitigation the writer concludes, however, that "We need not pause over the Law of Climax; it is generally understood." Which I thought is rather fortunate.

After assimilating these and numerous other more or less concrete passages my rising hopes

of large emoluments and literary fame were checkmated by the following: —

The real reward of literature is the joy of producing it.

This brought me suddenly back to the point where I began reading the directions; for beyond this sort of recompense I had previously entertained no hopes.

The pamphlet being made up of several short articles and essays by different "authorities," contains a variety of suggestions to the literary aspirant. I should have said *helpful* suggestions but for the fact that the ideas of these instructors, so far as they are intelligibly expressed, are so manifestly contradictory to one another that they leave the student more than ever in a quandary as to what to do. He is not likely to be seized with an impulse to pick up a pen and attempt to imitate his preceptors, as a boy would be to put on his first pair of skates and begin skating, after being shown how.

One of the writers,— perhaps the best of the lot,— after talking himself around a complete circle, made a brilliant finish at the starting point by observing that in so short an article it is impossible to impart much useful knowledge

on the mysteries of authorship; "it is an art to be acquired only by practice," he concluded. Another said, "It is an inborn gift,"—not to be acquired at all; but merely developed.

From early childhood we are taught to give a certain amount of credence to what we read in print. Apparent profundity begets respect, and there is sufficient credulity and self-abasement in most individuals to produce an attitude of deference toward great men and printed sayings beyond their power of understanding. Involved phrases and the resultant obscurity of meaning are therefore often mistaken as an evidence of profound learning, and the credulous reader, after exhausting his mental faculties in a vain effort to unravel the mystery, concludes that the fault must lie with himself. These plastic qualities of the human mind are often imposed upon, for it is a common practice among writers having no very clear analytical ideas upon the subject in hand, to veil their ignorance in ambiguous phrasing and by so awing and obfuscating the reader cause him to feel that his lack of understanding must proceed from his own mental inferiority. But no reader, however intelligent, can derive entertainment or instruction from vague expressions

of entangled thoughts, any more than he can get a clear view of the bottom of a muddy pool.

Good writing, like good acting, always looks easy, and invites imitation. I once heard a lady remark to her escort at the theatre that it seemed as if the star performers were always given the easiest parts. Singular as it may seem, the easiest English to read is the most difficult to write. In other words, it is hard to write easily, just as it is difficult to appear natural and self-possessed before an audience. Self-consciousness and the usual proneness to show off lead to unnaturalness in writing no less than in acting. It would seem as if the majority of writers do not appear to realize the important fact that the most forceful writing is in the direct and unostentatious style that implants the ideas in the mind of the reader with the least resistance — provided, of course, that the directness and simplicity are not carried to the point of baldness — and that any undue attempt at rhetorical display must be made at the expense of lucidness.

Complexity is of course more readily excusable in poetry than in prose. In poetry we rather enjoy searching out the central idea from a labyrinth of words artfully entwined

about it,— upon the same principle as we enjoy untying the ribbons and unfolding the wrappers that conceal a Christmas package. This, however, is not to be considered a justification of the great mass of knotty and puzzling verse that one has to turn and twist about like a puzzle picture and read it upside down and backwards to unravel the sense. The proper definition of the word poetry bears no analogy to that of puzzle. It is "a form of literarture that embodies beautiful thought, feeling or action in rhythmical language,"— a definition with which many rhymsters seem totally unacquainted.

A treatise on authorship, if written by a practical author in language readily comprehensible to the average intellect, might be made to contain many helpful hints; but it would be palpably useless to tell a person how to think intelligently if that person had no powers of so thinking; and if he possessed the necessary faculties the direction would be needless. It would be equally futile to tell a person how to express an idea intelligently; for if he possessed the innate gift of genius this requisite would naturally follow, and gain fluency with practice. It would be about as reasonable to suppose that a person could become a writer by reading

about how to do it as it would be to assume that a valuable recipe could be written on how to paint a picture, or how to play golf, or how to make money in the stock market. It must be patent to any rational mind that if market tipsters had any valuable knowledge on the subject they write about, they would use it themselves instead of selling it so cheaply.

This reminds me that once in my early boyhood I read an advertisement by someone who professed to have discovered an easy path to riches, and was willing to impart the secret for ten cents. I sent ten cents and in due time received this answer, printed on a card —

> Save your money, and don't waste your time answering foolish advertisements.

The ten cents was well invested.

While Milton, Rossetti, and a few others, showed remarkable precocity, resulting from certain natural endowments, this fact need not operate as a restraining influence upon literary ambitions. Granting it to be true that the really great poets are not of the made-to-order variety, there are other branches of literature that bring larger and more immediate returns. Doubtless there are many with latent literary

ability who have missed their calling and strayed off into other occupations, just as there are many others who have mistaken their rightful calling and invaded the sacred precincts of Mount Parnassus.

Many years ago I wrote a thesis on English literarture, which earned for me the coveted distinction of being awarded a school prize. Shortly thereafter I tried my literary wings in an article, which I submitted to one of the leading periodicals, taking particular pains to assure the editor that I was not writing for a living, and that the matter of compensation was of secondary consideration. In due time my article was returned with the customary polite note thanking me for the privilege of examining it, and by way of manifesting a friendly interest in my welfare the writer congratulated me on being in the fortunate position of not being obliged to earn my living by my pen.

A professor of English literature once told me that one of the rudimentary requisites of first importance in successful authorship is for the writer to be able to find flaws in his own composition. I boldly assured him that I found this to be one of the least of my difficulties,

though I have since discovered that impartially to judge one's own composition is much more difficult than to find flaws in the work of others.

One of the instructions usually given to literary hopefuls is, "Read — read incessantly!" Which is about as instructive as it would be to advise a would-be painter to examine the pictures of all the great masters, or to tell an impecunious person to work incessantly if he would become rich. Millions of men work hard all their lives and go to their graves without having accumulated enough to provide a decent burial, either because they have no money-making genius, or because what they have is misdirected. So, too, a man may read all his life without awakening any originality of thought or capacity for expressing it. Indeed it would be safe to assert that unless one thinks independently as one reads, with a definite purpose in view, the mere process of excessive and perfunctory reading will dwarf the creative faculties and actually defeat the end sought to be attained. It may be likened to the act of employing someone to do all your thinking for you. I hazard this view even in the face of a contrary reflection by so eminent an authority as Charles Lamb, who says: —

I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. Books think for me.

It is worthy of note, however, that at the time of writing this he had already reached the stage of ripeness in mental growth and literary fame. To read purely for pleasure one must assume an attitude of compliance and be led along with a more or less detached, non-critical mind, but in reading with a view to preparing for authorship it becomes necessary completely to abandon abstraction, to hold tenaciously to a posture of critical analysis, and to practice diligently the art of absorption. Casual and apathetic reading will certainly do the literary aspirant more harm than good. By judicious selection and careful study a particular style may be imitated more or less successfully; but there must be some independence of thought — although an idea does not necessarily have to be new in order to be made useful and effective. It is sufficient if the method of applying it be original. Indeed it has been contended that there is nothing fundamentally new in literature of the imagination, and that all such writings are mere rehearsals of some previously expressed idea. I have sometimes set down

epigrammatic phrases and philosophical conclusions of my own private coinage, which seemed to scintillate with brilliance and originality, and later have been shocked to find the same identical thoughts more eloquently expressed by some ephemeral writer whose span of life far outstripped that of his works. But this is too deep a subject to be treated here. It is at least certain that the declaration of an axiomatic truth or apothegm will often appear apt and fresh in its application to certain situations. Also realistic characterization, no matter to what station of life it be applied, is impressive in painting and in literature as a reflection of real life; and a faithful picture of the homeliest peasant may attract more admiration than the portrayal of the grandest queen in regal garb. Not that the subject itself is either new or attractive,— it is the method of treating it that calls forth praise.

It is authoritatively stated that less than five per cent. of the manuscripts submitted to publishers are accepted, and that less than three per cent. of those accepted turn out to be large sellers. If we exclude from these the works of all the well-known writers whose names almost invariably insure the prompt ac-

ceptance of their manuscripts, there is less than one manuscript in two thousand that brings its author any considerable pecuniary reward. Incredible as this may seem at first thought, it is easily explained.

Through all the departments of learning, from the primary school up to and through the great universities, the pupil, whether willing or unwilling, talented or untalented, is constantly beset with the task of compulsory composition. It is not therefore a matter of surprise that a great number of ill-starred literary careers result from the practice of thus superficially training hundreds of thousands of youthful minds. I once had a Chinese butler who after gaining a smattering of English at a night school discharged himself from my service, with the declaration that henceforth he intended to earn his living by writing poetry and magazine articles.

The average young man is sooner or later confronted with the grave problem of choosing a vocation; and after looking the field over if he fixes his choice upon some profession, he may decide to take up literature as a side line until he becomes self-supporting in his chosen occupation. But no one would think of taking

up law or medicine as an accessory to some other higher aim in life. The pursuit of literature, be it remembered, is in itself a calling or life work of the highest importance,— not a stepping-stone to something higher, nor yet a refuge for stragglers who have failed in everything else. The fact that young men and women cannot plunge recklessly into it and win success by their own indifferent and unaided efforts is verified by the preponderance of failures. It is true that in a fit of despondency after being jilted by the coquettish Maria Beadnell, young Charles Dickens happily stumbled into literature and won great renown; but his case was a rare exception, for he was possessed of unusual genius.

In preparing for the ministry, the law, or the medical profession, the student spends several years in persistent and methodical effort under competent instructors, after acquiring a fairly liberal education,—a fundamental necessity. These years of preparatory work must then be followed by many years of practice and research before the student may reasonably hope for even a moderate degree of success in his work. During all this time the mind is directed and systematically trained with a

singleness of purpose. If the same intelligent thought and application were given to an adopted literary career the failures would be greatly minimized, and the vast accumulation of insipid matter that overcrowds the shelves of public and private libraries would be correspondingly diminished.

We have special scientific schools, medical schools, divinity schools, and law schools,—why not literature schools, where the mind may be developed and trained to work in harmony with the pen? In the handling of plots in stories and dramas there are certain recognized principles of technique that are of no less importance than the writer's vocabulary; and the successful mastery of these fundamentals without the aid of a competent instructor is a triumph that falls to the lot of comparatively few. The master writer may safely depart from them, but to the beginner they are usually indispensable.

The demand for belles-lettres is both persistent and perennial. No other profession offers larger or surer rewards for the same amount of effort; and there is no occupation in which genuine talent is more quickly recognized or more generously applauded than that

of writing stories for the entertainment of the great multitude of readers.

We now have boards of examination and investigation for nearly everything,— why not have one for inquiring into the qualifications of authors, and licensing them, in the same manner that doctors and lawyers and other professionals are licensed? A quack physician may poison one person by mistake, but a writer may poison the minds of thousands. Physicians are consulted only in emergencies, while good literature is a constant and universal household necessity; hence the importance of high quality.

To reduce the question of authorship to its simplest form: words are merely the vehicles used by the writer in conveying thought, just as colors and shades are employed by the painter in portraying his impressions. The essential idea must take form in the author's mind as a condition precedent to the act of recording; and for the absence of coherent thinking no combination of words, however flowery, will atone. It is the underlying thought that gives vitality and force to the expression; the words are merely a means of conveyance. The immediate success of a writer who has a message to convey may depend largely on how well he

masters the art of combining the words necessary to express the thought; but the permanency of the work will depend on the enduring value of the thought expressed.

Although great importance is attached to "literary style," perhaps we need not disturb ourselves with serious apprehensions that any grand ideas are going to waste for want of capacity for expression. The overburdened mind will find some means of relief. Let him who yearns for literary immortality spend as much effort in training the mind on *what* to say as he does in trying to find out *how* to say it. There is no apparent evidence that in writing the Book of Proverbs the author gave himself any concern about the intricacies of the laws of rhetoric or style. I have read many books with a feeling of lament that the author, so marvelously gifted in literary style, had but a limited imagination and found so little of human interest to write about. On the other hand many writers seem to possess an abundant store of ideas, without the literary faculty for expressing them. It is comparatively easy to make writers; but to produce sublime thoughts is another problem. As shallow springs usually go

dry in seasons when water is most needed, so a shallow brain may not be relied upon to generate thoughts of lasting value. The man who embarks in literature enters a region where big game abounds, and unless he is equipped with arms, ammunition and sureness of aim commensurate to the size of his game he had better keep close to the border fence, or out of the field entirely. In short, to undertake a great theme in literature without the requisite skill and mental endowment would be equivalent to attacking a lion with a pop-gun.

So much for the production of literature. We may now consider it briefly, after it has been cast adrift on the world. There is such a great variety of tastes, even among intelligent readers, that it is difficult to set any standard by which either the popularity or longevity of literature may be determined. A book or essay that is considered dull or vapid by one may be praised by another of equally good judgment. Certain it is, however, that a capacity for constructing fine phrases — no matter how well developed — does not imply undying fame in authorship, any more than elocutionary accomplishments make a great lawyer, even though

they may be a desirable concomitant. Apparently the old adage about "fine feathers," etc., does not apply to literary compositions.

I once heard a learned person say that "No great man is without critics and enemies." The very elements of greatness may consist of making enemies, and then outwitting and overcoming them. Daring departures from precedent in action and thought always arouse antagonism, though they often count for ultimate triumph.

Surely no writer ever won unchallenged renown. If he sticks to the beaten paths he is commonplace; if he departs from them he is sure to be criticised. If his ideas are original they are obtrusive and unsupported by precedent; if they are not original he lacks genius.

Perhaps nearly every thoughtful reader has indulged in the mental speculation as to the mark of distinction between evanescent literature and literature that is born to live. In other words, what are the particular life-giving qualities that determine classic literature as distinguished from that which is not considered classic?

The judgment of the newspaper and magazine critics would appear to be an unsafe cri-

terion, because there occasionally appears a work upon which they nearly all agree, and in the succeeding generation their verdict, which may have been one of unanimous praise or condemnation, is set aside by the great reading public, which is the court of last resort. The writings and the personal characters of Byron, Shelley and dozens of others were excoriated and damned by nearly every contemporary critic, yet posterity has stamped them with the seal of universal praise. Indeed a large part of what is now generally accepted as classic literature was once roundly condemned by critics; and much of it would, no doubt, be no less harshly dealt with by the present generation of critics if it were again obliged to run the gauntlet of critical review. Which leads to the conclusion that we should not rely unreservedly upon the judgment of those who appear to know best. The standards by which some critics are inclined to judge the author of a book are more or less akin to the customary and superficial method employed by women in judging one of their own sex whom they meet in a formal way at a reception — by her "style" rather than by what she may know. If a writer's style is bad he is at once impossible; if it is

good he may become popular, at least for a time. Style is the prevailing requisite of today; thought, for tomorrow. Hence popular books usually die, and some unpopular ones live. It is an anomalous fact that the "best sellers" are nearly always the "poorest keepers;" just as the juiciest and most palatable fruit spoils quickest. As applied to literature, this might be used as a sound argument that literary tastes, like fashions, are inconstant and ephemeral.

It would appear that not only is the taste of the reading public subject to spasms of fickleness, but there are several distinct classes of readers: some who read only the so-called classic literature, others who require their reading matter to be mostly of the voluptuous, or romantic, or sentimental type; and a large class who find entertainment in the lucubrations of volatile writers who having solved the sex problem to their own infinite satisfaction find it highly profitable to impart their discoveries to others.

There can be no more effective advertising of a book among certain readers than to have it universally condemned from the pulpit as sensual, scandalous, unwholesome and unfit for

clean Christian minds. Such scathing denunciations are sure to arouse curiosity, even among Christian church-goers. Perhaps it may be regarded as a regrettable fact that in order to meet the demands of a wide circle of readers some of our best writers have been tempted to sacrifice their hopes of immortality and deteriorate into sensationalism. Indeed, sensationalism appears to be the order of the day — novels, dramas, and newspapers fairly teem with it. We must like it, else it wouldn't thrive as it does. Fortunately those to whom it is distasteful are not obliged to patronize it.

If it be true, as is often stated, that the writer's posterior fame is to wane in proportion to the adulation and other more substantial rewards he enjoys during his lifetime, this may afford a grain of consolation to those whose manuscripts have been refused by publishers or failed of the anticipated appreciation on the part of the public. The conscientious author who fails to attract a large audience may sympathize with the public for being a generation or two behind him, and comfort himself with the thought that in due time they will catch up. Keats, Shelley, and a few other notable examples may be kept in mind to feed despairing

hopes. The butcher and baker, however, are not apt to regard such hopes as acceptable collateral on overdue accounts.

With all due respect and reverence for the great historical novelists, of whom the nineteenth century was so prolific, I am doubtful if many of them would attract widespread attention if they lived and wrote in the present age. Their verbosity alone would paralyze the readers' interest. We tolerate their wordiness now largely out of respect for their memory. If we say, Four and two make six, the problem is solved instantly and the result is understood. But if we say that, By the mathematical process of adding two and four together we ascertain the result to be three times the lesser number, which is six, we load the sentence with needless words and complicate it with gratuitous observations. In the latter case we use one hundred and nine letters to perform a service which could have been completed more effectively with seventeen letters. Here we have an example of the characteristic prolixity of many of the old novel writers; and even now with modern novelists that tendency, though much improved, is far from being extinct. Most writers are too generous in dispensing the fruits of their brain;

they give the reader too much bulk for his money. Which reminds me that once when I was a small boy I bought a penny's worth of candy, and the shopkeeper put the tiny stick into an enormous paper bag that would have held five pounds. "There, my lad," said he, "see what a big package I'm giving you, all for one cent." Most of the stories that are served to the reader in five-hundred-page volumes could have been better told in two hundred pages; and many a good one-act play has been padded out into a three-act failure.

It may be pertinent to ask if we have not already preserved too much "classic" literature? Our library shelves are crowded with bulky volumes in extended sets, the larger part of which are seldom, if indeed ever, consulted. We give too much thought and veneration to persons and traditions of the past,— a fault due in part to our school training. For instance, in 1911, at a Boston private school for girls, out of a class of eleven pupils, all versed in Latin and French, and thoroughly schooled in Greek and Roman literature, not one knew where or in what state Chicago is located. Several of them thought it was a state instead of a city. One girl of seventeen — an exceptionally bright

pupil in ancient history — chanced a guess that it was in Detroit!

It may not be out of place here to reiterate what I have said in a previous paper, that sometime, sooner or later, the collector of a library must call a halt on the present thirty-, forty-, and even sixty-volume sets of *classic* literature, and confine his purchases to certain parts of each writer's complete works. The science and ingenuity of each generation seem to provide for most of its needs, and possibly some day in the centuries to come they will paraphrase the old proverb and make it read, "Sufficient unto the age is the literature thereof." We are pretty much all fronted one way in progressiveness — even in the well-grounded principles of religion; but we turn backward for our paintings and our literature!

In history we read of Napoleon as having been a great man in his time, of which he was perhaps a natural product, just as the diffuse writers were the natural products of their own times; but we now have no place for Napoleon other than in memory. Indeed our generation has produced a miniature American Napoleon of its own — not the sanguinary type of Napoleon who destroys the armies of enemy nations

and devastates foreign lands, but one who grew to such enormous proportions on his own native soil that in a fit of peevish temper he kicked the pillars out from under the roof beneath which he was nourished to such Herculean power and tumbled the great structure in ruins upon his own head and the heads of all his brethren.

By referring back to the works of some of the once popular but now forgotten authors we may find many passages and situations that are as vibrant with beauty and human interest as ever they were, but no publisher would be so daring as to disturb their peaceful sleep in oblivion, any more than a society woman would venture to resurrect her great-grandmother's bonnet and wear it to the opera. It was good enough — perhaps the most fashionable — in its day, but styles have changed. So have literary appetites.

Regarding the modern novelists, while it is a commonly admitted fact that we have no great contemporaries ranking with Balzac, Dickens, Scott, Thackeray, Hugo, and others, yet a number of good books are being produced, — books that bid fair to hold their place alongside some of the older classics, so called. When the literary husks of this generation are cast

away by posterity perhaps some unexpected names will be revealed in the limelight of immortality. Let us hope so. As for contemporary poets, doubtless the "high cost of living" discourages their labors; but possibly in due time some self-sacrificing bard may rise to the occasion and perpetuate the memory of himself in immortal verse.

An acquaintance once asked me if I would advise him to embark in literature as a means of livelihood.

"Certainly not," I said,—"unless you are temperamentally and financially prepared to spend several years in diligent study and practice, as you would in any other profession."

I was not, however, at that time aware of the existence of the booklet entitled, "How to Become an Author."

THE LATE DISCOVERY OF THE ORIGINAL HOLOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT OF *WALDEN*

THE LATE DISCOVERY OF THE ORIGINAL HOLOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT OF *WALDEN* [1]

THOREAU'S GREATEST CLASSIC, AND HIS MOST PERSONAL WORK

THOREAU needs no introduction to the literary world. His works are now more highly prized, both in this country and in Europe, than ever before, and in bringing out a new edition of *Walden*, the work upon which his fame securely rests, no apology would be necessary, even though it were only a reprint of existing editions. Readers will be astonished to learn, however, that the authentic manuscript of *Walden*, which has but recently come to light, contains upwards of twelve thousand words omitted from the printed editions. It has commonly been supposed that the original manuscript was destroyed by the publishers of the

[1] Issued in a revised and unabridged edition by The Bibliophile Society in 1908.

first edition at Boston in 1854, and it was not known until lately that the author retained the complete draft in his possession. After its discovery among a mass of papers left by Thoreau in an old chest, it passed directly into the hands of Mr. Bixby, who with characteristic generosity turned it over to The Bibliophile Society to print for the members. The authenticity of the manuscript is unquestioned, as it is entirely in Thoreau's handwriting.

At the time *Walden* was first printed, Thoreau was unknown to fame, and the publishers may have "cut" his manuscript deliberately, in order to get it into one convenient-sized volume. Whether or not a duplicate draft of the manuscript was furnished them and destroyed for the purpose of preventing the author, or future generations, from later comparing and discovering the omissions is left to conjecture.

He usually made two, and sometimes more, copies of his manuscripts, oftentimes with but slight changes. Although the proof-pages of *Walden* were sent to Thoreau to read, it is doubtful if he either compared them with his manuscript or noticed the omissions. Even if he did, he was perhaps no less anxious than the publishers to keep down the cost of composition,

I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a ~~summer~~ morning, ~~having taken my~~ accustomed ~~bath~~, I sat in my sunny doorway from ~~sunrise~~ till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sang around ~~or~~ flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those ~~seasons~~ like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands ~~would have been~~. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of

for he had lost a considerable sum on his first publishing venture, *The Week*.

It is sufficient to say that in order to make a copy of the previously printed edition conform to the text of the original manuscript it was necessary to make changes in nearly three hundred pages, and in some places the restored parts extend to from one to four pages. The facsimile here inserted indicates the corrections and additions made on a single page. The inserts marked "A," "B" and "C" on the facsimile were too long to be copied in the margin of the corrected page. They contain nearly two pages of new matter which was deleted from the original edition and all succeeding reprints. Surely no further evidence is needed to illustrate the necessity for a new and authoritative text of this important classic.

It should be observed that Thoreau, although he said he was not a hermit by nature, took naturally to the solitude and ruralness of his wooded surroundings at Walden Pond. After graduating from Harvard he tried teaching, but that was not to his liking, so he turned his attention to experimenting in economic living. It was his custom to get at the bottom, or original source, of things that interested him,

and it may be said that he reduced the problem of living expense to its final analysis when for eight months' rations he spent only $8.74. The two largest items in his tabulated list of expense were rice and molasses, and once he paid two cents for a watermelon. The sum and substance of the whole matter is thus concisely stated by Thoreau himself: —

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately; to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life; to live so sturdily and Spartanlike as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms; and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or throw it in the teeth of him that made it, as it were; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it."

It therefore seems clear that before going to the woods Thoreau had a definite purpose in mind, and that purpose was to publish a treatise on the economy, simplicity and contentment of the "simple life," giving account of such experiences as it actually yielded to him. He preferred to write from knowledge gained by personal contact rather than from untried theory. He kept no horse, cow, dog, cat, hens, or any other domestic animal or fowl; and from his published analysis of segregated life it is evident that he succeeded in cornering it and looking it square in the face. The reader must not, however, take him too seriously in all that he says, for he was no less a humorist than a philosopher.

Thoreau's writings are peculiarly suited to all classes; they are alike instructive and entertaining: to the indolent class because he proves conclusively what comfort, and even happiness, may be enjoyed with the minimum of effort and expense; and to the diligent they satisfy an important desideratum in the form of the most wholesome entertainment. *Walden* has been described as "a book for those who love books, for those who love Nature, for those who love courageous thinking, courageous acting, and

all sturdy, manly virtues; a book to be read through; a book, also, to be read in parts, as one uses a manual of devotion; a tonic book in the truest sense; a book against meanness, conformity, timidity, discouragement, unbelief; a book easily conceived of as marking an era in a reader's life; a book for the individual soul against the world."

In publishing *Walden*, Thoreau has given to the world a true account of the most important events of his life. Every side of his peculiar and interesting character is plainly reflected in its pages. His life was comparatively free from thrilling events, and Cupid's virus seems not to have been deeply inoculated into his veins. His fondness for Nature appears to have dwarfed all other attachments. For the most part he wrote, as he lived, with simple directness and fearless energy. It mattered not to him if his mode of life and style of writing did not please his neighbors. He was living and writing for a larger audience. And having accomplished his purpose of "driving life into a corner" and reducing it to its simplest form, he did what he considered his duty to mankind in publishing the results of his experiment. The world could take them or leave them, just as it liked. It

chose to accept them; and *Walden* will be read with avidity a thousand years hence.

Human nature has really changed but little in the past two thousand years, for we find Horace, Tibullus and other poets of their time raving over the beauties and the joys of the simple country life, free from the turmoil of the city with its perplexing trials and worries. Perhaps this may not seem strange, considering the alacrity with which tyrants were wont to destroy or banish ambitious citizens who held political views contrary to their own.

The rural bachelor life of Thoreau at Walden differed but little from the solitary existence of Horace at his tiny farm in the Sabine Hills near Rome, which has been the Mecca of travellers for upwards of a thousand years. This free-from-care, out-of-door life has always been a happy and fruitful theme for poets,—one of which neither readers nor poets ever tire. It is a beautiful aspiration which in the lives of most people is never dispelled by actual realization; hence its enjoyment is perennial.

Perhaps the chief difference between Horace and Thoreau was, that while the former was a master of metre, the latter, though possessing a poetical mind, usually got into difficulties with

his measures when he attempted to express his thoughts in verse. However, Mr. F. B. Sanborn thinks that most of his bad verse is due to a peculiar ambition to differentiate from other poets, rather than to a lack of knowledge of poetic rhythm. If this be true, he must have felt conscious of having attained the summit of his purpose when he wrote the following lines, which were left out of the printed editions: —

My feet forever stand
  On Concord fields,
And I must live the life
  Which their soil yields.
What are deeds done
  Away from home?
What the best essay
  On the Ruins of Rome?

His intimate friend and biographer William Ellery Channing appropriately styled him the "Poet-Naturalist," which seems eminently more fitting than it would be to call him a Natural-Poet. He was, however, considerate enough to confine his writings mostly to prose, and so long as he treats of familiar objects and topics his style is generally lucid, smooth and entertaining. In at least one place Thoreau laments that he fears he has "not obtained to obscurity;" but

this fear may have been expressed early in his career as a writer; for surely some of his later paradoxes are sufficiently meaningless and obscure, especially in the Economy chapter.

It may seem strange that in all of Thoreau's writings he seldom refers to the gentler sex. He was not of the *beau idéal* type and was perhaps as much let alone by women as they were let alone by him; although Mr. Sanborn says that he had a love-affair in early life, and is said to have gallantly given way to another suitor. However, he offers no word of solace to unfavored beaux, and no apology for his persistent state of bachelorhood. On the other hand, Horace — with whom Nature was none too generous in bestowing her gifts of figure and grace — devoted many of his best lyrical compositions to the seductive charms of the fairer sex. He paid his respects to Chloë, Pyrrha, Lydia, Barine, Asteria, Lyce, and others. In his odes he gave many heart-to-heart talks to the lovelorn, and offered a timely word of warning to the unsophisticated youth against the wiles and snares of the golden-haired Pyrrha, into whose irresistible toils he confessed himself to have been once beguiled. But never again! he said.

The writings of Horace would indicate that he was less of a naturalist than Thoreau, although at heart he was probably more devoted to the simple country life, for he remained at his Sabine Farm until death; whereas, although Thoreau discourses at great length upon the delights of a close intimacy with Nature, it is observable that he partook of these rural pleasures with moderation; for he spent but little more than two years in the woods, during which time he made frequent visits to the village; and it is perhaps not to be doubted that upon these occasions he was quite neighborly with his mother's pantry. Mr. Sanborn says that he frequently sat with Thoreau at his mother's table, where he ate and drank with relish whatever was set before him,—even tea and coffee, which he appears to have scorned at his hermitage. And after two years at Walden he was satisfied to return to what he terms "civilized life," where he remained permanently thereafter. While it is unquestionably true that the simple and independent modes of the isolated rural life of which he wrote have certain distant attractions for many persons, it is none the less a fact that most of us are quite content to enjoy only their mirrored reflections in books

amid more comfortable and luxurious surroundings in a populous and civilized community.

I well remember that upon first reading *Walden* I was seized with an irrepressible desire to visit the lake and vicinity that Thoreau immortalized; but a visit to the place later dispelled many of the visions with which the author had stored my imagination. It seemed so bleak and commonplace that I was obliged to re-read the book in order to regain the good impression I had formed. It does not follow that Thoreau's descriptions were fantastic or overdrawn at the time,— but countless changes have taken place since then. Many beautiful dreams thus find a rude awakening in their actual realization, and even the fond delights in childhood retrospection which are wont to linger with us through life become as a shattered mirror when we attempt to turn back and realize them again.—

> When thoughts revert to memories dear,
> To days of yore when love was young,
> Content thyself to let them sleep
> Amid the joys in dreamland's realm;
> For shades of night have hallowed them,
> And when revealed to noontide's rays

Of later years and newer ways,
They'll fade and die before thy gaze.
(H. H. H.)

Among the features that stand forth prominently in Thoreau's writings are, his matchless power of description — for he could discourse entertainingly upon the least attractive object, or the most empty subject — and his capacity for making the best of conditions as he found them in life. In *Walden* he makes the drudgery of hoeing beans in the hot sun appear as a pleasing pastime that would excite the envy of a gentleman of leisure; and for this alone he commands my undying admiration. I am conscious that when a youngster of ten or twelve years I missed a great deal by not being able to view this sport as Thoreau did.

When he tells how sumptuously he dined on corn meal moistened with pond water and baked on a pine shingle before the fire out of doors, with salt and molasses as the only condiments, while the envious birds and squirrels twittered and clamored overhead in the surrounding trees, he makes the elaborate *menu* of a Palm Beach winter hotel appear vulgar and uninviting by comparison. The glare of the modern stage, with its dazzling lights and

dancing girls, seems dull and inane as compared with the joy and contentment of sitting on the door-step silently and alone on a dark night in the wilderness listening to the weird medley of frogs, owls, whippoorwills and other "nightly visitors," all chanting, hooting and screeching in discordant unison, accompanied by the sighing and creaking of the tree-tops as they rocked to and fro in the breeze. After describing these nightly serenaders, he says: "Though it is now dark, the wind still blows and roars in the woods, and the waves still dash, and some creatures lull the rest with their notes. The repose is never complete." And when Thoreau elaborates upon the unalloyed beauties of Walden Pond in winter, covered with its sheet of ice and blanket of snow, one is strongly tempted to forsake the cosey steam-heated quarters of a modern apartment hotel to journey with him through the snowdrifts amid the wildness of Nature.

Though there is much of an impracticable sort in the logic and sayings of this hermit psychologist, there is nevertheless much to be drawn from his philosophy of life. Contentment we know is one of the most essential elements of happiness, and we find the impress of

this upon most of Thoreau's utterances. While at work in the bean-field he would alleviate all discomforts of the job by indulging his thoughts in the beauties of Nature about him and pitying others engaged in less agreeable pursuits. Then at the turn of the row, there was the shrub-oak copse, where he could rest in the shade; while at the other end, in lieu of the shade there were the green blackberries "deepening their tints" as he "paced slowly backward and forward" between the rows. Everything partook of a sunny hue,—even the tinkling of his hoe against the stones brought forth sweet music which was wafted away in the still, open air. "Simplicity! simplicity!! simplicity!!!" he says, — to which we might well echo "Contentment! contentment!! contentment!!!"

We cannot all go to the woods to live as Thoreau did, surrounded by the peaceful serenity of Nature, but we can at least profit by some of the lessons he teaches. He appears to have taken life in a calm, temperate way, as it came to him, and while the demands upon his mental, physical and financial resources were less than those made upon the average individual of today — or even in his own time — there is much in his theories that may be advantage-

ously applied to other more exacting and eventful careers. When continued rain kept him in the house from hoeing his beans, he did not worry himself ill by thinking of the weeds that were growing up to smother them.— "Though it prevents my hoeing them, it is of far more worth than my hoeing," he soliloquizes.—"If it should continue so long as to cause the seeds to rot in the ground, and destroy the potatoes in the lowlands, it would still be good for the grass in the uplands; and being good for the grass, it would be good for me." The pattering of the rain on the roof of his little hut was music to his ear, and as he sat alone in his sparsely furnished room he consoled himself with the satisfying thought that he did not occupy a spacious house in the village, furnished with costly rugs, requiring a maid at the door with mop and pail to prevent the water from running in and destroying the furnishings.

He was never quite alone, day or night; for the pond, the trees, birds, squirrels, and his bean rows kept him company in the daytime, while at night the owls, whippoorwills, foxes, frogs, mice and even the wasps which swarmed in his house — frequently in his bed, as he says — at certain seasons, serenaded him at night.

They all were regarded as his friends and companions. Of his beans, he says,—"I came to love my rows, my beans, though so many more than I wanted. They attached me to the earth, and so I got strength, like Antæus." He said that his only enemies were worms, cool summer days, and most of all, woodchucks; for all of these interfered with his beans; hence his enmity. He even had a sympathetic word for the weeds which he felt obliged to oust from his bean rows. He said that "every little pine needle expanded and swelled with sympathy" for him. And thus he drew inspiration and companionship from every untamed creature and object about him.

He says that he was "no more lonely than the loon in the pond, or than Walden Pond itself; or than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture; or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or horse-fly, or a bumble-bee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house."

Though a professed lover of solitude, Thoreau had an agreeable and neighborly disposition. His circle of friends was restricted, but

he took much pleasure in the friendly calls of those who occasionally visited his lonely retreat, and, strangely enough, he devoted two chapters in *Walden* to "Visitors" and "Winter Visitors." He said, "I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way." But he never forgave the two strange women visitors who borrowed his dipper — avowedly to get a drink — and threw it into the pond. He had an old-fashioned house-raising, "rather to improve so good an occasion for neighborliness than from any necessity." Incidentally, it is to be noted that the time-honored custom of having "house-raisings," "log-rollings," "husking-bees," "apple-parings," "quiltings," and other neighborhood "affairs," all so productive of jovialness and good-fellowship, has of late years been much neglected.

I personally should like Thoreau better if he had refrained from tiresome digression upon recondite and hypothetical questions. So long as he confines himself to narrative and facts near home — as he generally does in *Walden* — he is a delightfully entertaining writer; but his frequent indulgence of his fondness for

paradox and antithesis is naturally puzzling to the reader. He had many peculiar and quixotic ideas,— which if printed disconnectedly might well occasion anxiety for the author's sanity,— but after stumbling a little in getting over these rough places, when we return with him to his Walden resort and listen to his narrative of the life and scenery there, depicted in his simple, yet inimitable, style we at once forgive and forget his eccentricities. For instance, nothing could be more picturesque than his description of the surroundings of his little cabin, to be found at the beginning of Chapter IV. He speaks of the sand-cherry which "adorned the sides of the path with its delicate flowers arranged in umbels cylindrically about its short stems, which last, in the fall, weighed down with good-sized and handsome cherries, fell over in wreaths like rays on every side." He says he tasted them "merely out of compliment to Nature." Even the homeliest ragweed becomes a beautiful flower under the touch of his magic wand. And when further along he describes Walden Pond in summer, with its "crystalline purity,"— the "distiller of celestial dews," its placid bosom surrounded by a natural fringe of foliage which hung in clusters and

festoons over its borders, one is almost resistlessly impelled to go and take a plunge in this immortalized pool, were it not for committing sacrilege, in thus profaning it.

In most books we encounter more or less abstruse matter, or chaff, or padding, but on the whole, probably Thoreau's *Walden* is freer from these common faults than the average of the recognized classics, among which this work is destined to hold a merited place in the front ranks through ages to come. The discovery and publication of the *complete* manuscript is therefore an event of considerable literary and bibliographic importance, alike to readers and collectors.

AMERICAN CRAFTSMANSHIP

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A FEW years ago I undertook to collect data and ideas for an article to be entitled "A Plea for American Craftsmanship;" but finding that it would require a great deal more time and thought than I could devote to it the undertaking was abandoned, and in lieu of an expansive article on the subject I have limited myself to a few discursive remarks. My first move was to write to a few artists and art institutions; and the widespread interest in this subject is attested by the fact that in every instance I received a prompt and courteous reply. The following is a copy of the letter sent out, and following thereafter are some of the replies which I have recently rescued from my files. The artists and the institutions are all widely known, and the remarks cannot fail to carry much weight. The letters are printed in the order in which they were received.—

To the Director of The Corcoran Gallery of Art,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir,— I have in contemplation an article under some such head as "A Plea for American Crafts-

manship," but before preparing such an article, I wish to obtain the views of a few of our leading arts-and-craftsmen, as well as directors of our foremost art institutions, such as will aid me to a more intelligent understanding of the present situation. In order to reduce the substance of my views to the simplest form, I may explain that my contention (which is based upon more or less study and observation) is —

1. That the demand in this country for works of art, such as paintings, etchings, engravings, books and sculpture, is steadily increasing, and that America leads all other countries in its purchases in these lines. I attribute this largely to the fact that in the past few years the resources of this country have been greatly developed, and many wealthy people are furnishing costly homes and establishing large private libraries and art galleries.

2. That this growing demand should stimulate and encourage our craftsmen to exert their utmost endeavors to raise the standard of American Craftsmanship up to that of any other country.

3. That the work of American painters, etchers and engravers has not been adequately appreciated by our people here at home, many of whom are infused with the delusive idea that a work of art must come from abroad in order to merit their approbation. In other words, our artists, generally speaking, are not patronized, fostered and encouraged sufficiently to attract the highest order of intelligence and genius to this field of labor.

Can you give me any ideas from your own personal

experiences or observations that will assist me in the preparation of an article along the lines suggested? If so, your interest in the matter will be much appreciated.

The following reply to the foregoing, under date of May 19, 1904, is by Mr. F. B. McGuire, Director of The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 17th instant in reference to the article which you propose, "A Plea for American Craftsmanship."

In my opinion there is in that subject a field for an immensely interesting and a much needed article. I fully agree with you that in the past Americans have spent entirely too much time, attention and money in the acquisition of works bearing a foreign name, and imported from abroad, to the detriment of the encouragement of those works by American artists which, by their artistic merit, are entitled to the respectful consideration of all American collectors. There are many, many works produced in our own country by our own countrymen which are vastly superior to the great majority of the mediocre works imported from abroad. I believe, however, that the American people are very rapidly coming to the appreciation of that fact, and that home art is now receiving more and more of the encouragement and support of Americans which it so fully merits. In my opinion, America stands abreast of all foreign countries in the production of almost all of the Fine Arts and Crafts. Our School of Landscape

painters in particular stands among the first of the world, second only to a few of the painters of the Barbizon School. I am not opposed to the importation of fine examples by foreign men, but I am opposed to the neglect and indifference which has heretofore been apparent towards American works, when, in point of fact, they are fully able to compete with the product of the rest of the world. However, as already stated, this indifference is fast dying out, and I believe that the American productions in all branches receive their full share of appreciation, and that this satisfactory condition is daily on the increase.

In our own Gallery here in Washington, I note with great satisfaction, that the attendance of visitors is annually on the increase; that the interest of the public in the collections of the Gallery is rapidly becoming greater, and their sense of appreciation keener.

I trust that the above will be of some service to you in the preparation of the article which you now have in mind.

Mr. Edwin D. French, the well-known copper plate engraver, who has since passed away, wrote as follows.—

I have your favor of May 17th, in relation to your proposed article. The subject is one which, it is needless to say, is of very great interest to me, but at the same time I do not know that I am in a position to offer anything new concerning it. I entirely agree with your position, as you have outlined it in your letter. The prejudice against home products and the preference for

things imported, formerly very prevalent, is gradually passing away, both because of the improvement in arts and manufactures here and because of the increasing tendency to judge everything on its own merits. One thing is certain, that it is the demand which creates the art and develops it; and as our people gradually awaken to the importance of art and beauty in everything that is made, by the natural laws of supply and demand the men to supply this need are sure to develop. As to my personal experience, I surely cannot complain of lack of patronage and appreciation,— undoubtedly greater than my work deserves!

The following letter from Mr. James MacAllister, of the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, Philadelphia, is of interest in this connection.—

Yours of the 23rd instant just received. I have read your letter with great interest, and I desire to express my hearty concurrence with your view as to the art situation in this country at the present time. Indeed, your propositions very clearly express my own opinions on the subject, and these have been steadily growing in this direction for the past twenty years. Just at this time I am very much occupied with the work incident to the closing of the academic year, but I shall be glad to set down some points which may be of service to you. Meanwhile, I am sending you the circular of the Department of Fine and Applied Art, which will indicate to you the scope and ends of our work in that line. I may say that the Drexel Institute buildings were

designed with a view to the influence of the architectural environment upon the students. We have a very good Museum and Picture Gallery, besides other appointments, which are open to the general public as well as to the students. I shall be glad to send you a copy of the circular which gives a description of the buildings as soon as it is ready.

It will also be instructive to read what Mr. Howard Pyle has to say upon this subject of artists and their work.—

I do not know how sufficiently to apologize to you for not having sooner replied to your favor of May 17th. I have been very much harassed of late with a matter, the solution or non-solution of which meant a very serious loss to me, not only of time and worry, but of money as well.

I laid your letter aside to answer it, and so overlooked it in spite of its importance.

It seems to me that the thoughts that you outline are very excellently stated, and I do not, in the main, exactly see how they can be improved upon. However, to comment upon them *seriatim*: —

1. I think your remarks under this point are entirely correct.

2. I think your comments are correct under this point, unless it be that they are not carried far enough. The constant demand for artistic work not only *should* encourage our artisans, but *does* stimulate them to better and better results in craftsmanship.

3. I should say that the work of American illustrators, etchers, and engravers is appreciated by American people more than similar work made abroad. Our artists (excepting our portrait artists) are not so much cared for as foreign artists — not because the American people cannot appreciate their work, but because the work of our American artists is not, in the main, truly American; being inspired by foreign Art Schools and studios, and not by the truths of Nature. Those of our artists who have shown true originality have always been recognized and appreciated by those Americans who care for pictures.

I speak in this, of course, only from my own limited experience.

The following letter from Mr. F. Edwin Elwell, curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is comprehensive and will be read with appreciation by those interested in this subject: —

General L. P. di Cesnola, Director of this Museum, has read the following and requests that it be sent to you as his opinion in answer to your honored favor of the twenty-third of May. He regrets that owing to lack of time and a great amount of work in connection with new and valuable collections for the Museum, he could not answer your favor personally.

Regarding your first view.—There can be little doubt that America under her present prosperous conditions is a favorable field for the sale of works of art.

The "newly rich," however, are not great patrons of art; it is generally the men or women of wealth who have passed through this first stage of prosperity, and having arrived at a more intellectual and refined condition and conception of life, interest themselves in art. It comports well with the amassing of great wealth in America, that certain individuals have turned their attention to matters of art and have been instrumental in the building of great Museums.

Second.—The apparent growing desire, on the part of wealth, to surround itself with art productions by men of genius is a very healthy condition for the art life in America, but it is to be feared that the artist in this country has not been wholly successful in divorcing himself from the very commercial atmosphere of this great land; enough at least to place himself fairly alongside of men of equal genius in Europe. He has not as yet learned the importance of intellectual individuality in his work, and therefore is not recognized as so thoroughly an artist as the foreigner who has lived a really artistic life in thought and work. It is the next step of the American artist to separate himself from the commercialism in his own nature.

Third.— It is quite true that the works of American artists have not received sufficient appreciation from our own people,— largely, one may believe, for the reason given above. The few really good artists in America are so by nature and do not have the advertising faculty which seems to be the greater part of the makeup of many of the so-called artists who have considerable name without ever having done any really

great or thoughtful work. America is beginning to recognize the importance of protecting her artistic men of genius from the cabal of art-organizers and merchant-artists who have used their profession to degrade it; the artist himself is at the point where it is necessary for him to realize the importance of his own individual responsibility to his profession, and in doing so he will not fail to be recognized, not only by the art lovers in America, but all over the world.

There seems to be an abundance of talent and in some cases genius among the artists in America, and apparently no real reason for supposing that art is not recognized because of American make. As wealth begins to select for itself instead of employing a dealer, the chances for American artists will be increased and the wealthy man will find a new avenue of pleasure open to him in his association with men of rare artistic genius who have inspirations as valuable to the life of the race as the wealth of the multi-millionaires.

The old saying, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and in his own house," is frequently true of authors, painters, etchers and engravers when applied to their own generation. Any man who is unable to supply plenteously of the necessaries, and even the luxuries, of the home is in imminent danger of sharing the proverbial fate of the prophet, at least in his own house. Artists are commercially handicapped, in that they have no

special aptitude for handling the mercantile side of their work,[1] and inasmuch as a demand for their productions cannot well be created or stimulated by personal solicitation or direct advertising, they are, after years of patient and laborious effort, often compelled to await the dilatory patronage of an inappreciative public. Posterity, in looking over the works which have been handed down, selects first what it considers the best, and sets the "market" price upon them; henceforth they are purely articles of commerce. For those who have comfortable incomes, and are content to labor for posterior fame, this plan works very well, but I have not observed that the world's art galleries or libraries have been noticeably enriched by the works of persons having fixed and independent incomes which entitle them to be ranked in the leisure-class. Artists, like race horses, have to be kept poor in order to stimulate their best endeavors, and they rarely find any difficulty in vesting themselves with this one desideratum. On the contrary the best results cannot be hoped for or expected from artists who are half-starved and half-clothed; for they are sufficiently human in taste and temperament to

[1] Whistler was one of the notable exceptions.

enjoy the modest comforts of life,— in even exchange for which they are generally willing to give their unstinted efforts. The painter who produces, and the etcher and engraver who faithfully reproduces meritorious works of art with which to decorate the halls, art galleries and library rooms of present and future generations are richly deserving of the gratitude and patronage of their contemporaries.

The fabulous prices demanded today for the paintings and prints of the so-called old masters would seem to prove one of two things: either that the craftsmanship of the painters, etchers and engravers has not in recent times received sufficient encouragement for the production of works of equal excellence with those of the old masters, or else that art patrons are unduly influenced by an unsane desire to possess antiquities regardless of merit. There are many who labor under the delusion that anything in the line of Fine Arts, in order to be worthy of notice, must be imported from foreign shores; indeed this is also true of many articles of merchandise of which the home-made product is superior to the imported. A foreign brand appears to be blindly accepted as a guarantee of excellence.

In nearly all vocations the men of late generations have displayed greater ingenuity and versatility than were exhibited by their ancestors, and it may therefore be reasonable to conclude that if the achievements in the field of art and literature have fallen below old standards it is because the patrons do not in these modern times offer sufficient encouragement to men of genius who are capable of reaching the highest development in those vocations. Not only does there appear to be a servile inclination to ascribe undue merit to art and literature bearing the impress of extreme age, but there is a discouraging disposition on the part of some to sneer at contemporary production — regardless of merit — in comparison with things ancient. This predilection is perhaps not without reasonable origin, for it is doubtless the natural result of a vast accumulation of mediocre works in contemporary art and literature with which the country is flooded. Verily the sordid spirit of commerce has too frequently invaded the hallowed precincts of the artist's studio, and his work, like that of most writers, is inspired more from the need of gold than from love for his art. I know an artist who is capable of producing a few paintings that would place his name

alongside those of the great masters of the past if he were given the opportunity to work out his conceptions.[1] He is a great genius, a good painter, a thorough student of art, and a prodigious worker. He once told me that he had never been able to take the time required to work out his conceptions because the increasing household expenses of a large family had always kept him down to commercial work, upon which he could realize quick returns. For years he has dreamt of two great pictures, which, if successfully portrayed on canvas, would be worthy of a place among the world's masterpieces; but either of them would require from eighteen months to two years to paint. He once said to me, rather sadly, "I should like to do them, but it wouldn't pay." The deduction to be drawn from this is that here in America our age is not likely ever to be noted for any great masterpieces in painting, because in the first place we have very few who are capable of producing them, and those few are too busy making a living to permit them to work out their highest ideals; hence they degenerate into commercial artists and remain such.

[1] This was Howard Pyle, now deceased. Examples of his work are now in great demand, both here and abroad. — H. H. H.

Great artists are not the fruit of education; they are born of inspiraton, and when of necessity this inspiration is repressed and made subservient to the bare requisites of subsistence the quality of our art productions must suffer correspondingly. Alas! the same conditions apply to our etchers; but the remedy here is more simple. Only one person or institution may own a painting, while a hundred or more may own prints from an etched plate. Fine paintings are seldom made to order, and the artist who turns out job work for magazine and book illustrations is in a poor way ever to become famous as a painter. A hundred or two hundred people would never think of clubbing together to have a great painting made to order, but they would club together and guarantee the cost of a fine etching, where each could procure a copy.

About twenty years ago the whole country was deluged with prints of inferior etchings which were sold — and are still sold — by department stores and dealers in cheap pictures at less than one-half of what it would cost to print a first-class impression from the plate. The result was that etchings were popularized at the expense of quality, and many people of

taste lost interest in them. The old masters of a hundred or so years ago would spend a year or more on a plate, while later the art became so transmuted that one could take a subject or an idea to the etcher and return with the finished plate, such as it was. Thousands of miserable specimens from these poor plates have been signed by office boys and clerks and sold by unscrupulous dealers as "artist-signed proofs."

It should be remembered that there is a vast difference between good etchings and bad etchings. The most skillful etching printer cannot produce a good print from a bad plate, though a wretchedly poor print may be taken from the finest plate ever made. The average individual will readily distinguish the difference between a fine painting and a worthless daub, but there seems to be a prevalent and misguided belief that etchings are produced mechanically, and that any criticism should be directed against the limitations of the art or process itself, instead of the artist or the printer. The limitatons are, however, by no means so narrow, and the conceptions and interpretations of the etcher and the etching printer are as amenable to comment or criticism as those of the painter and the illustrator, though of course this applies to

original rather than reproductive work. In reproductive etching the artist is not to be blamed for making a bad picture from a bad subject, provided he follows his model, but in original etching he is allowed the same latitude as an original painter, and is equally answerable for any defects in composition. This is not true of the engraver, whose art invests him with no liberties. His art is not creative; his one alternative is to follow the model with mechanical precision.

It should be remembered that the quality of an etching depends almost as much upon the printer as the etcher. No matter how much time and skill are lavished upon a plate, the prints therefrom would be rendered worthless by inferior printing. A first-class intaglio printer must possess an accurate knowledge of values,—light and shade. The finished plate is first thoroughly inked all over, and every line completely filled. This is accomplished by working over every part of the plate by hand with a ball or roller of porous cloth saturated with ink; then the superfluous ink is wiped off with a piece of coarse cloth, then with the hand. The artistic talent of the printer is displayed by the skill with which he uses the various rags in the

process of retroussage — wiping the ink out of the lines here and there to give the proper values and character to the picture. In some of the etched lines the ink is "loaded on," while in others only the faintest trace is left. In order to produce a solid dark effect in certain parts of the plate where the lines run deep the printer uses a piece of soft muslin, with which the ink is drawn up out of the furrowed lines and over the edges until it meets in the narrow spaces between them, thus producing a rich and almost black effect. The furrows, carrying more ink than the surface between them, give character and modelling to the picture. In thus "smearing" the ink artistically the lines are softened and melted together so as to produce much the same effect as a painting in black and white. Some of the flat surfaces must be polished clean, while others are given just enough ink to produce a soft tint when printed. In preparing a large plate from one to four hours may be consumed in this labor. After the plate is thus made ready it is carefully laid on the press, and the sheet on which it is to be printed — having been moistened for the purpose — is laid over the plate, covered with a thick piece of felt and run through the press between two large felt-

covered steel rollers, adjusted to suit the thickness of the plate, after which the sheet is peeled off gradually, displaying an imprint of the artist's conception, absorbed from the inked lines and surfaces of the plate. The print is then stretched and tacked around the edges, on a board, and laid away to dry. The plate is returned to the printer's bench and the same process is repeated for each impression. The press and the helper stand idle during this interval. It is therefore obvious that the printing of fine etchings involves considerable time and cost, and requires no mean order of talent. A "state of the plate," or "clean wipe" impression, is a mere skeleton as compared with a carefully "drawn up" print. Mr. Ritchie says that "the method of printing etchings and other intaglio plates is the same today as it was in the time of Rembrandt and Dürer," and that "the modern inventor has found no way to economize time, labor or expense." The process of printing etchings is not mechanical and does not respond to "improved methods" any more than portrait or landscape painting. Nothing could be more disheartening to the artist than to have his plate printed in a slovenly manner by an incompetent printer. First-class etching printers are ex-

tremely scarce. They are generally a product of foreign soil, and are imported to this country at considerable expense.

There appears to be no more reason why inferior or spurious prints should interfere with the demand for meritorious work than there is that the demand for beautiful hand-made rugs should be lessened by the abundant supply of the cheaper machine-made variety. The fact remains, however, that of late years the demand for etchings has offered but little inducement for the painstaking artist and the intaglio printer. Already the wood and steel engravers live only in the memory of the past. The ranks of the etchers and engravers on copper are being gradually depleted, and promising recruits are extremely scarce. Indeed it may be regarded as a serious question whether or not the next generation will have any engravers or etchers at all. Writers are already deploring the fact that engraving is a lost art; but in truth it is not so much a lost art as it is a neglected and unpatronized art. The cost of living is now so high that young men and women when choosing occupations are not likely to be attracted to a calling where they have to stifle their appetites and practise

self-denial through a long stretch of years with the empty hope that their efforts may find due appreciation in some distant generation, long after they are dead. We read of such generous and self-sacrificing impulses only in novels. We do not frequently hear of graduates of our great colleges and universities being attracted to these vague and unpromising callings, when determining upon vocations for future livelihood.

There is not to my knowledge now in this country even a primary school of etching or engraving, and in these busy times no one seems to know or care anything about the present or future of these important arts, except a few faithful ones who are merely plodding along, contented to make a meagre living, scarcely knowing how or why they came to fall into their professions, or how to get out of them into something more profitable. Publishers have adopted cheaper and quicker methods of making pictures for framing and for book illustrations, and about the only patrons of the beautiful arts of etching and copper plate engraving are private individuals in quest of book-plates, with an occasional commission of some sort from some club or society. The

result is that in this country of wealth, education and vast population there are only two or three concerns that make any special pretence toward fine intaglio printing, and not one of these could subsist were it not for other commercial work to keep their men and their machinery employed.

In addressing the members of a book club some time ago I made the statement that very few publishers even knew the names and addresses of our etchers and engravers. I put the matter to a test by writing to four book publishers. One wrote, giving the name and address of an etcher whom I knew, and also mentioned the name of another, address unknown. Another mentioned one name, but gave no address; the third replied very courteously, saying that they never used etchings in their publications, and did not know of a good etcher in this country; while the fourth gave the name — but not the address — of a well-known copper engraver who, by the bye, had been dead nearly two years. It is claimed by publishers that the cost of etchings is prohibitive, hence they are not more generally used. The cost of printing etchings prevents their use in any but costly editions, but if this branch of illustrative art were

more generally employed there would be more etchers and etching printers, and the expense would thereby be reduced to some extent.

The present status of affairs is that aesthetic persons hold aloof because there is very little that is worthy of their notice; and the art dealer refuses to take a long chance on investments in etchings because of the lack of demand. And so matters stand — the limited talent we have is not encouraged by anything except scattering small orders; the artistic sense of the lover of etchings is not gratified by any noteworthy modern productions, and the inevitable result must be that in a few years we shall have no etchers at all, and no likely material from which to develop any.[1]

The best way to obtain good workmanship is to stimulate a demand for it; while on the other hand the best way to create this demand is by producing first-class work. No etcher in this generation would be so rash as to risk a year or two on one plate without a guarantee and drawing account. He would never undertake to invest a year's time and incidental ex-

[1] Since this was written, in 1910, conditions have considerably changed, and there are now frequent exhibitions of the work of modern etchers. — H. H. H.

pense in a plate with the uncertain chance of reimbursing himself through the sale of prints therefrom. And the print dealers are not willing to risk an investment of two or three thousand dollars in a really meritorious etching with no reasonable assurance of getting their money back. On the other hand, people of taste and means do not object to paying ten, twenty, or even fifty dollars apiece for etchings if the value is in them.

Steel engraving has been so long neglected that it would be useless to attempt to revive it upon the fragmentary talent that now remains; and etching will surely follow in the same trend unless something is done to rescue it and rebuild it with the assistance of what material we still have left. Apparently the only visible remedy against extinction is for a few lovers of etchings to club together, and selecting one or two of the more promisng etchers have one or more good plates made every year. As illustrating the expediency of this plan, a case in point may be cited; last year a number of the Bibliophiles clubbed together and guaranteed Mr. Bicknell an amount sufficient to compensate him for about six months' work on a large portrait of Lincoln, in addition to the cost of

making a limited number of prints on parchment, cost of matting, etc. The result was that Mr. Bicknell was enabled and encouraged to produce what is perhaps the best plate he ever made. With the exception of a single copy for the artist himself, not a print was made but for those who shared in the original guarantee. That a superior quality of work of this kind is still held in high esteem is evidenced by the fact that offers of two or three times the original cost of these prints have thus far failed to bring more than one or two copies into the market.

If an etching is worth preserving at all, surely it is worth its pro rata share of the reasonable value of the artist's time spent in producing it, and the cost of printing it; if it is not worth this it is fit only for the waste basket, or for some one who neither knows nor cares anything about art.

The publications of The Bibliophile Society up to the present (1910) contain etchings and engravings from nearly a hundred copper plates by eleven of the leading artists in this country, and these plates may safely be regarded as being fairly representative of early twentieth century copper plate etching and engraving. The first publication alone con-

tains prints from eleven etched plates, all made especially for the edition; and while, in the aggregate, the etchings and engravings in the issues up to the present time represent an outlay of many thousands of dollars for making and printing, the money has been wisely expended in this way, and in addition to enhancing the beauty of its productions, the Society has done a praiseworthy work in the encouragement of an art too little known and appreciated. This Society came into existence in the second month of the first year of the present century, and it would afford an interesting view if we could take a peep behind the curtain and see in what manner the Bibliophiles will be celebrating the hundredth anniversary, and what manner of artists and printers they will have then; and what they will think of the work of the "Old Masters" such as Bicknell, Hopson, French, Smith, Spenceley, Fagan, King, Wilcox, Aikman, *et al.*, whose best efforts are now exemplified in the Bibliophile series. The active life of the Society itself may not survive the present century, but it would be safe to say that many of its publications, and the names of the authors, the artists and the printers whose work they represent, will live for many genera-

tions. A series of club books containing, in less than ten years' time, the work of eight of the best presses of the country and that of most of the representative illustrators, etchers and engravers should figure as being of some importance in the history of early twentieth century book-making, to say nothing of the priceless literary treasures presented here, for the most part, in *first editions.*

Mr. Bicknell is now under contract to produce for The Bibliophile Society a set of etchings for book illustration that will require from twelve to eighteen months' work,[1] during which time he draws a specified sum on account each month; and members who receive the volume are sure to be impressed with the beauty and importance of fine etchings in book illustration. The Society of Iconophiles and the Iconographic Society are doing a limited, though highly commendable work in perpetuating the arts of etching and copper plate engraving.

It will be observed that in these few rambling remarks I have not attempted a studied and exhaustive treatise on the subject in hand, but

[1] These appear in the superb editions of Gray's "Elegy" and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" issued by The Bibliophile Society in 1913.

have merely noted in a superficial way such ideas as have presented themselves to me from time to time. Consonant with the hope expressed by Professor Matthews, in his recent article on "Books that I want," I trust that enough has been said to evince the need of a careful consideration of the matter, and that some enterprising student possessed of ample resources and inquisitiveness will undertake a more thorough review of the actual conditions and tendencies, particularly in their relationship to etchers and engravers, with suggested remedial measures for the present state of inertia.

THE ABUSE OF THE TERM DE LUXE

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Dearly bought experience is perhaps the best known antidote for the human credulity of collectors and hobbyists in various pursuits. The individual who exhibits a fondness for books, or paintings, or engravings, or stamps, or antiques, is constantly beset by sharpers — human leeches — who impose upon the inexperience and vanity of mankind, and grow fat at the expense of their victims.

The inclination toward fine books being a common characteristic among people of good taste, there are perhaps more collectors of books than of all the other items mentioned combined. This large and constantly increasing clientele insures a highly productive field for a certain class of publishers and their agents, who manifest a patronizing interest, especially in new recruits among the book-collecting fraternity,— for the seasoned collector, having paid the penalty of his inexperience, is no longer an object of easy prey.

It would appear that when a person with newly acquired book-collecting tendencies is discovered by some agent in the trade the word is passed along and the new buyer is thereafter led to suppose that he is placed on equal footing with the Prince of Wales, J. P. Morgan, and the Emperor of China, in the enjoyment of special privileges in getting hold of rarities. If he "falls in" and suffers his vanity thus to be aroused, the question of expense in such fast company must of course be regarded as a secondary consideration.[1]

The brazen mendacity and bare-faced swindling methods of some of these "publishers' agents" of late has hastened them to their own ruin, and their practices have been checked by arrests and grand jury investigations. Although the exposures have proved annoying to the victims whose names and portraits in the newspapers have been brought so prominently before the public, the ultimate effect will be wholesome, and it is to be hoped that book-buyers and hobbyists in general will profit by the revelations.

[1] It will be remembered that a few years ago special sets of Dickens, Shakespeare, Paul de Kock and other authors were made up and offered at fabulous prices — sometimes ranging as high as two hundred thousand dollars for a single set.

Through the machinations of a few self-styled publishers and their unscrupulous agents the much abused term "de luxe" has come to have about the same significance in the popular mind when applied to books as the word "gold" has when applied to the proverbial brick. A few years ago the owner of de luxe (signifying luxurious) editions of books took justifiable pride in displaying his treasures so as to excite the mingled admiration and envy of friends and neighbors. In the light of recent exposures, however, anything tagged "de luxe" is left sealed in the original packages and stored in the attic or some other out-of-the-way place, lest some inquisitive visitor may discover it before it is resold — at the large premium promised at the time of its purchase.

Before the term "de luxe" came into general misuse as a means of "buncoing" unsuspecting book-buyers, a bibliophile was glad to own as an accomplishment the taste for books thus designated; but today in lieu of a graceful adornment it has in many cases become a positive affliction, to be accused of which is equivalent to an insult; and the man who becomes widely known in the community as a "de luxe buyer" absents himself from his favorite club

and shuns his friends, as if they all had some infectious disease. He is likely to wake up any morning and find his name — and perhaps his portrait — conspicuously adorning the front page of the morning paper under some such heading as "Another Dupe!" or "Victim of Book Swindlers!" And what is, if possible, even more exasperating, he is then summoned to appear before the grand jury to testify against the dealer or agent, and incidentally to give implied evidence of his own gullibility. The victim thus feels the heavy impress of the brand, "Easy Mark," on every part of his anatomy; and it is a calamity for which no sympathetic friend or relative can offer any soothing balm, for no relationship, however intimate, would insure the safety of anyone broaching the subject in his presence.

The truth is that the books involved in these transactions are not truly *de luxe* books at all. They are only pretentious makeshifts, and have but little if any artistic or commercial value. Whatever value they may have had in their original form is usually destroyed by the substitution of counterfeit title-pages with some high-sounding name, and pretending a very limited issue. In the place of the customary

number supposed to designate the order in which it came off the press a star is sometimes used as the symbol of extreme scarcity. This is indeed an appropriate device, since the horizon of the unprincipled publisher contains a star for every buyer who has the price of the agent's story,— for the story is vastly more interesting than the books themselves, and that is really what the purchaser buys.

It is worthy of remark that many of the recent "de luxe book scandals" have resulted, not from book-loving propensities, but from an adventurous merchandising tendency on the part of the victims. With utter disregard of the hazards of speculation, some of them entered into league with the agents to take costly sets of books, to hold them for a while, and then share the tremendous profits on their resale to someone else. In transactions of this nature the buyer is moved by purely mercenary rather than book-loving motives; and under the temporary influence of the agent's cajolery and promises of large profits he casts all the laws of prudence and business ethics to the wind and embarks in the book business in partnership with an unknown traveling agent, who agrees to sell the books again for a portion of

the profit. It is not therefore a book-lover who is befooled, but rather a book-speculator who, willing to take a gambler's chance, becomes a party to a "gentleman's agreement" to find another dupe easier than himself. He is sure to lose, because he is gambling on an impossibility.

The "de luxe agents" frequently collaborate in team work; their *modus operandi* varying according to the wealth, position and credulity of their victim. While one is waiting to open negotiations with a prospective customer for the sale of a costly set of books, his colleague, who perhaps represents himself as the confidential secretary and librarian to the Duke of Some-place-or-other, is engaged in the most strenuous efforts to purchase the same set of books from the same customer at some exorbitant price. In other words, before attempting to sell a customer a set of books they try to buy them from him, pretending to have heard that he owned the set. This is clearly a case where selling "short" could be recommended; for if the middleman in the transaction were familiar with stock market tactics he might sell "short" to the Duke's secretary, then "cover" his sale at a good profit.

When the customer buys the books he noti-

fies the Duke's secretary — whose address has been given him. Possessed of the coveted property he assumes the rôle of book dealer, and lies in wait for his promised customer, who meantime having received the "high sign," sends a note of regret that he has been called away on important business, but will return in a few days.

Mean time the agent calls again on his victim and in breathless exultation imparts the news that he has found another buyer who wants the books at a greatly increased price, and endeavors to buy them back. The customer is "wise," however,— or thinks he is — and refuses to let them go, even at a premium. In confidence the agent finally reveals the name of the new customer — the Duke's secretary who, he says, "has just left for Chicago, in quest of a set of books there on which I hold an option. The price is $5,000, but I have been unable to raise the amount. He is willing to pay ten thousand for this set, and if I could raise the money I could telegraph it through the bank, take up the option and have the books sent here to you, and we could divide the profit, netting twenty-five hundred apiece." Mr. Mark (the customer) being already in touch with the Duke's

secretary, accepts this corroborative information with infinite satisfaction; and seeing a chance to add considerably to his anticipated profits, he goes to his bank with the agent and transmits five thousand dollars by telegraph direct to the "collector" in Chicago who owns the books. The said collector — who is no other than the Duke's secretary — then returns to the East with the money and divides it with his "pal." A day or so later this secretary calls on Mr. Mark and reports a highly disappointing trip to Chicago; but his joy is unconstrained when he learns that the very set of books he went after has been bought for him and will arrive in a few days. He takes a bill of sale of the two sets, and insists on paying five hundred dollars cash down as a guarantee of good faith. He then leaves for a few days to round up some more sets he has in view, so that they may all be sent abroad in one shipment. Incidentally, having bought some valuable books from a certain agent, will Mr. Mark please receive and hold them with the others if they should be brought in during his absence?

Next day another gentleman calls; he represents the man in Chicago who owned the valuable set of books. After shipping the books he

found that a mistake had been made — the set, instead of being worth five thousand dollars, is worth twenty thousand. He offers to return the purchase price, with five thousand more in order to get the books back — knowing the while that they have already been contracted for by one of his confederates. On being told that they have been sold to another he leaves the office — heartbroken. In a day or so the first agent appears again with an automobile load of books done up in bundles, accompanied by another man, supposed to be their owner. The agent takes Mr. Mark aside and explains the facts: he has bought these books for eight thousand dollars and sold them to the Duke's secretary for twelve thousand; but he has paid only one thousand down, and the owner will not turn them over until the balance is paid. The agent will divide the profits if the other seven thousand is advanced for a few days. Mr. Mark hasn't that amount of ready cash but he raises it inside of an hour, and takes the books under shelter. He waits a week, two weeks, a month; but no one calls to get the books or to sell him any more. When at length he emerges from his trance, the lively comedy in which he so cleverly played the central part

has become a tragedy, and he finds himself in sole possession of the stage,— and the books. He then remembers that of all the boxes and packages stacked about his office he has not opened a single one, and does not know for a certainty whether they contain books or grindstones. On opening them up and calling in an expert he finds that the whole lot would not bring five hundred dollars in any auction room in the country!

Booklovers whose motives stand for what the name implies have no reason to become discouraged, or to disown their inclinations because of such farcical episodes. Books of genuine merit are not to be discredited or brought into permanent ill repute through the use of the term "de luxe" for improper purposes, any more than good stocks and bonds are injured by the army of "get-rich-quick" fakers who sell great quantities of bogus securities to unwary persons who come under the influence of their glowing prospectuses and cleverly devised schemes. With these wares, as with books, it is the inexperienced and overcredulous who suffer the losses. The cicumspect investor relies either upon his experience and judgment, or upon the advice of a reput-

able banker or broker; and in like manner the prudent book buyer should be guided by his own wisdom, or in the absence of such wisdom, seek the advice of some reliable authority. He should, moreover, stick to his own line of business in transactions for profit, and leave the pursuit of merchandising in books to those engaged in it as a means of livelihood.

It is a deservedly high compliment to fine books, that they may, in a legitimate manner, be made the instruments with which to unloose the purse-strings of busy men of affairs. A man may not be easily deceived in his own business, but having no means of controverting a seemingly rational representation of goods in a line of trade with which he is unfamiliar, he is obliged to accept the statements, if at all, at their face value. Most men are upright in their business dealings and are unsuspecting of chicanery in their fellow-men; and this tendency is imposed upon by human sharks in many lines of trade.

It would be manifestly irrational for a man to purchase from a glib-tongued stranger an investment bond issued by a company of which he knew nothing whatever, without first taking the pains to investigate it. It would be equally

absurd to contract for a costly set of books on any kind of terms through a strange agent purporting to represent an unknown publisher. But booklovers who deal with publishers or dealers of good repute, whether directly or through their authorized agents, have little to fear.

It is to be expected that a hobbyist in any pursuit will get unhorsed occasionally; otherwise there would be neither zest nor excitement in riding his hobby. But as a compensation for early errors of judgment one of the keenest enjoyments of book-collecting is realized when in the light of a not too costly experience you can smile triumphantly at the story of the faker who mistakes you for a novice.